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Humanizing the Humanities: A Historical, Cultural, and Philosophical Examination of the Disintegration of Humanities Higher Education

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HUMANIZING THE HUMANITIES:

A HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DISINTEGRATION OF HUMANITIES HIGHER EDUACTION

by

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Abstract

This essay is an examination of the multifaceted reasons humanities education in American colleges is losing standing and funding. Historical, cultural, and philosophical perspectives are used to analyze the grounds that have justified the decreasing levels of support for humanities education. Historically, there is no longer any external justification provided, as there was when Sputnik was launched and the Cold War was endured. Culturally, the high culture model of ascension through the accrual of cultural signifiers is no longer the dominant form of raising one's status, as it was when the humanities could be justified as cultural initiation. Philosophically, market-based capitalism has become the dominant framework for the current vision of humanity under neoliberal ideology, and the humanities is being cut as being tangential to that purpose.

The thesis is organized in an expanding framework, starting from a historical discussion to a cultural analysis to a philosophical examination. Many types of theorists and thinkers are used, including Marxists, post structuralists, feminists, critical race theorists, literary theorists, and educational philosophers. Reading and personal experience are the primary sources of research. This project concludes with a searching series of reflections on how humanities education has been compromised and what new perspectives can be incorporated in order to renew it. In summary, marketization must be disrupted with the use of text-based education that refuses commodification by way of a relational pedagogy.

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Personal Introduction

This project arose directly out of my experiences as a student and my problematic history with engagement during my time as an undergraduate student. I have been passionate about education since grade school, ever since I found my greatest source of personal development in it, but my experience has always been marked, but not marred, by a frustration with the ideals that school did not live up to. These ideals changed throughout my life, sometimes picked up directly from what the school attested or sometimes from what I thought the school should be doing. The ideals varied but the disappointment did not. Though this disappointment burgeoned into cynicism in late high school and early college, most of my educational career has actually been defined by great passion, the disappointment only existing by way of my grand hopes. I was ever the optimist, appreciating what school offered but wanting more.

By and large, my criticality took the form of petty rants and discussions turned debates. I would often get into friendly arguments with my parents, my friends, my teachers, and myself about what education should do, what it was capably of doing, and what I dreamt of it doing. Strangely enough, I thought teaching and education in general too important for me to participate in its practice. I never wanted to be a teacher because I thought I couldn't handle it. In some ways, that's still true.

The rare teacher that took my criticism always impressed me but I didn't find a powerful example of this until college. In my undergraduate career, there were plenty of similar frustrations, but the Honors College represented the apex of idealism and frustration to me at the time. They used the highest language and aimed for the furthest goal, and, due largely to this ambition, they were the farthest from hitting the mark. I also

discovered in the student community a group of students that shared many of my frustrations and were responsive arguers when discussing what should be done. Again, our critiques did little but circulate amongst students as we mired in a frustration that turned into cynicism.

Ironically, I became more alienated from these students as I grew less alienated in my education. During my third year, a Business and Technical Writing class asked me to recommend solutions to a problem for an organization I was involved in, and, being the overambitious Honors student I was, I tried to take on the entire Honors preceptorial program. I interviewed a few preceptors and students, surveyed many other students anonymously, and did a lot of other research to complete a long technical report that captured some of the most significant problems I saw. This report was largely a cathartic academic experience at this point that involved using my writing skills to summarize and analyze all the problems I wanted to express.

I was shocked however, to find the Honors College almost wholly receptive to my criticisms. This report was circulated throughout the school and a discussion was held about it with some faculty, me, and other students. My recommendations were taken more seriously than I ever imagined. Though I had the advantage of working with a small school that had the responsiveness to actually engage with me, it was still a hugely inspiring experience to interact with an organization that respected me. I was still a student but I could be an important part of the constitution of engagement. This was my turning part for critical engagement, not just in educational theory but in my life. It was a moment I discovered my political awareness, a moment I took my most significant step in lessening my alienation. Life around me, even in an institutional form, could change

with my will. This was the inspiration behind this project.

Though much of this project is focused on criticism, a continual effort is made, one that is culminated in the final section, to direct criticality toward creativity and how the humanities can be renewed. The greatest burden of Marxism is also one of its greatest beauties. A criticism such has been written cannot leave without being accompanied by a creation; a critical theory cannot feel complete without a creative practice. Though I am merely an undergraduate student, I must still put forth what effort I have to recommend something, to act in a positive direction.

I have been confident throughout this piece that my perspective at the very least would provide an interesting interpretation to the modern state of education but I am less confident that such a perspective, without much experience in first hand teaching, will be able to recommend something substantial. From here, I must limit myself to being unable to come up with anything as practical as a lesson plan, as useful as a reform, or as inspiring as a revolution – I must be happy with theory. As bell hooks said on the subject, theory can be a process of healing, and, in that sense, the theory I present is one that heals my problems with education – not fully, but well. It results not from expertise but from lived experience. By theorizing the problems of education up until this point, I have engaged in a cathartic analysis that in itself reconstructs my experience as something to be understood, problematizes my seemingly natural experience as something to be developed. bell hooks says further:

> "When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, what such experience makes more evident is the bond between the two-that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other. Theory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end," (61).

I can only hope that my theory achieves something toward closing this gap. Though I may not be able to put much of this into practice, practice is indeed the goal and this reciprocal dialectical relation was always in my mind.

Formal Introduction

As with the recommendation report, this thesis is too ambitious. I am trying to cover more than I possibly can and this involves stretching my experiences, my knowledge, and my capabilities to their absolute limits. I have tried to dig into my core as a student and bore out from there through reading and discussion to reach as far as I can beyond my immediate experience. Though I don't always directly reference this core, it is constantly and simultaneously my foundation and my blinder for this analysis.

My thoughts themselves are irreparably nonlinear so the organization of this thesis is entirely a retrospective design. I have tried to follow a path that will make sense and be approachable for a reader. Any piece, organizational, theoretical, or rhetorical that is not fairly easy to understand is a failure on my part. I do not consider it a success or an achievement to couch myself in intellectual language but a failure in ensuring my theory can enable practice for anyone who reads it.

I start with a short history of American education through the Cold War and the Vietnam War eras in **The Sputnik Moment and the Vietnam Betrayal**. This section is necessarily brief and is used to provide historical context to the developing discussion. Though this is largely an analytical and philosophical analysis, this section proves there is a valid historical and cultural precedent for such analyses. This section generally covers the boom in education resulting from the Cold War, specifically the launch of Sputnik, in

comparison with the Vietnam War, wherein general society suffers a countercultural revolt. These two events cause massive waves in the way education functioned and how we perceived education as functioning. This is not meant to be a comprehensive study but is simply the setting of historical grounds for understanding the resulting analysis.

I then go into a detailed analysis of the natures of culture, identity, and ideology in **Culture and Identity**. Though this does not immediately connect to education, I believe a proper analysis of these ideas is essential to understanding the damaging effects of a market-based society as well as the potential for other visions. Neither culture nor identity are subsumed into the other but are situated as aspects of a dialectical contradiction. Ideology is placed between them as a calcified set of ideas that are denied the ability to change based on social determination and rigid rationalization.

With a basis in culture understood, **The Disintegration of the Cultural Framework** explains how the changes from the 50s to the 60s evinced a shift in how higher education could be justified. Without a universal high culture to be assumed, higher education could no longer situate itself as the peak of culture. It begins to lose its traditional power, as it cannot promise the transferring of culture to students.

Classical Humanities and the Encroachment of Neoliberalism then examines how traditional forms of humanities education made this subject area vulnerable to the developments of capitalism. Classical great book programs that relied strictly on canonical texts disengaged themselves as critical political entities and withered as their foundation in culture was disrupted. This section also examines many of the problems inherent with this traditional vision and how most of it is recalled with nostalgia.

The next section, **The Rise of Neoliberalism** then explains the foundations of the

market-based ideology that then took dominance in education and throughout the nation. Neoliberalism is a new mutation of a number of philosophies, including enlightenment era thinking, liberalism, and positivism, all combined and mixed with the new dominance of the capitalistic market. Markets came to be the dominant depiction of reality, and, with that, reality was to be shaped to the market.

The Long March of Marketization then focuses on the efforts to commodify everything in life to be within the range of market reality. The university is focused on as a site that has been largely commodified, reshaped into another instance of the market.

This naturally leads to **Student Alienation**, a section that focuses on the subjective and structural alienation of students within the marketized system. Cynicism and lack of engagement are examined as consequences of structure. Though other models have inflicted this as well, the current form of the university as a corporate business and reality outside of it as a universal market is blamed for the majority of student alienation.

The final section, **Renewing The Humanities**, is a series of reflections on how the critical and creative spirit of the humanities can be renewed despite the threat of commodification. Focus is placed on pedagogy as an artistic effort with the text being given a primary place for the mediation of discussions. Thought is reconsidered as something that should not satisfy itself as an answer but open itself up to the future.

The Sputnik Moment and the Vietnam Betrayal

The Rise of Sputnik, The Rise of Funding

Without going into a detailed analysis for which I do not have the space, we have to begin with a depiction of the Cold War. The Soviet Union and the United States stood against each other in a standoff of mutually assured destruction, circling each other like schoolyard bullies waiting for the other to punch. This was fundamentally a masculine power struggle over who would be the most dominant in the world. Naturally, this struggle bristled the most with who had the most firepower and we still feel the vestiges of this impact today, as the United States pours as much funding as it can into national defense, even as individuals in the country see themselves as armed guards of their home properties. From the local to the national, there is a fundamentally masculine ideology of weaponized self-defense, a defensiveness that can of course creep into a defensive attack, such as the imperialist invasion of Iraq.

Unique to the Cold War however, is the Sputnik moment, wherein the Soviet Union launched the first satellite to break the confines of the Earth and orbit the heavens. Suddenly, it was less about who had more guns, though there was certainly mass concern this technology could be weaponized, and more about the primacy of culture and education. While the United States dumped money into the space race, the consequences of the Soviet's transcending this as yet universal historical boundary went deeper than a mere technological jealousy.

Space was a universal stage, an expanse that people had gazed into for the whole of human history, and the Soviet Union being the first to break this barrier was an

absolute affront to the supposed dominance of the United States, not only as a physical power but as a cultural power. There was no question to be had around the globe, no debate or doubt. The Soviets had crossed a line no one had crossed before and anyone could equally look up with amazement. The Soviets had become the best at something, and their ability to broach something universal cast them as the greatest nation on the globe because they were first to transcend it.

In this way, the very ego of the US nation was threatened and had to be compensated in other ways. To reassert itself as the dominant nation, the US engaged in a deep process of nature building or rebuilding, depending on how you look at it. What was best in the nation had to be drastically improved; everything that distinctly and characteristically marked the spirit of America had to be remade and improved. In other words, we were suddenly swimming in money. All kinds of government investments took off with unheard of levels of money. The government, as independent representatives of their constituent peoples, funded almost anything and everything that would contribute to the building of the nation.

In this grand process of making and remaking, the national culture had to be cleansed, purified, and brought to its best, most distinct condition. The age of McCarthyism followed this closely, a period that seems entirely alien and impossible to those looking back, largely because this cultural threat doesn't have the conditions to exist anymore. Anyone with Communist and Soviet connections was hunted down and forced to relent their ties or be blacklisted, sometimes even killed. Throughout the country, but especially in Hollywood and the government (one creating pop culture and the other political economic culture), Communists were purified from the nation. Our

culture could have nothing to do with the Soviets as the Sputnik moment solidified the divide between our country and theirs.

In accordance with this purification, what was American had to be strengthened. When it came to culture, the best way to do this was by funneling money into the university. Even before this moment, educators had long been held as the custodians of culture, as initiators for young folks (assuming the correct class, race, and gender) into their inheritances of national culture. These gentlemen were to be taught the greatest things written by the greatest minds, to be enrolled in the long and hypothetically never ending line of cultural development. By isolating themselves in the university, with only the company of long dead men, they were supposed to emerge like pupae from a cocoon after having gestated on the universal ideas of these geniuses (geniuses who were also the correct class, race, and gender).

But in the Sputnik moment, these bearers of culture were called upon for their "true" mission, not to be the benign gifters of culture but the active weaponizers of culture. The best could not simply be the best, it had to be better than them, the other: "[i]n the wake of Sputnik, an assessment that American schools were falling behind their Soviet counterparts became commonplace, a consensus codified by the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA), the first extensive federal involvement in educational policy and funding," (Hartman, 175). Especially with the GI Bill funneling more students than ever into universities, this pool of potential cultural warriors could not be wasted. This became especially important in the context of Soviet and American cultures alternately producing two opposing political systems, socialism and capitalism. The economic base and the super structural culture were one and the same as we

struggled to be purely “American” and not at all “Soviet” in every regard. Anything “Soviet” was a weakness to be expunged.

From this moment on, the institution of the university as a place of a worry, of concern, even of crisis became a common political point. The universities as bearers of cultures and bearers of a new nation in its infancy began to take on the responsibility of upholding the nation's values and ensuring the new generation carried them on. In a sense, the university became culturally nationalized as an essential part of the growth of a nation. "The contentiousness of federal aid to education was finally overcome because it was wedded to a topic around which a consensus existed: the need to beat the Soviets in the race for technological supremacy. And, yet, despite this marriage of convenience, consensus in education never really developed, signaled by the continued animosity directed at progressive education," (Hartman, 186). Any educational divisiveness was to be stamped out or swept under the rug, tradition becoming dominant and progression becoming threatening.

In this period the university received windfalls of money that thereafter would be inconceivable. Everything from theoretical physics, to engineering, to English was pumped full of money. Almost anything could be justified when the core of our culture was threatened from outside, but with a special focus on anything that could be seen as defeating the Soviets. Opposite to this, anything that challenged this focus was threatening. "In the months following Sputnik, the schools were widely cited as the weak link in America’s race against the Soviet Union. Progressive education and the philosophy of life adjustment were singled out," (Hartman, 176). There were concerns that while the Soviets were becoming a national super power, American university

education had too long focused on weak and implicitly feminine ideas of progressive education that involved thinkers such as Dewey's ideas of educating the whole child, not merely disciplining them.

The universities were then seen as fawning mothers, coddling their children and thus weakening them through feminization, which became diametrically problematic now that the country had to prepare for a possible war with the Soviets. What needed to be educated now was not the whole student and certainly not the feminine student but the masculine student, the one most capable of defending the country and attaining victory over the Soviet menace.

Part of this victory involved the elimination of supposed Soviet influence, so more progressive educational strategies were often attacked and "[a]s the multi-faceted rhetorical attack on progressive education intensified throughout the 1950s, the schools were widely assumed to be failing in their mission to train enough scientists and other high technicians for the national security state, considered a perilous development in the race against the Soviet Union for global supremacy," (Hartman, 175). Though most subjects received funding at least from proximity to this cultural defense fund, a special focus was inaugurated and instituted in fields we now call STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) for their abilities to not only figuratively but literally defeat the Soviets if it ended up coming down to that. "The Soviets' beating us into space shocked the nation and, for a moment, leveling education was set back on its heels. […] Survival itself depended on better education for the best people. External necessity injected into the easygoing educational world the urgency that should always be there. Money and standards emerged in the twinkling of an eye. The goal was to produce

scientific technicians who would save us from being at the mercy of tyrants," (Bloom, 49). The university was then and forever situated as something that could connect the young to external reality, initiate them in what was important, and send them out to do what the nation needed them to do, in this period, defeat the Soviets.

The important turning point in this conception of the university was the next understanding of the university as a research center. There had long been tensions within the university between defining it as an independent learning facility and as a dependent research center, but the Sputnik moment, with its vast sums of government funds, gave it a decidedly strong push toward research. Aronowitz says, "the main task of the research university was to become a knowledge factory. Its scientific/technological discoveries and inventions would be directed toward the means and the ends of economic growth and of Cold War public policy," (Aronowitz, 38). However, money so overflowed the university that other studies were funded as well, so long as they could be justified in some indirect way to the cause.

Even the most obscure of philosophy projects could often be traced back in some way to a government grant, some of its money maybe absorbed from a diffused fund or even manipulated from a naive funder. The university became inextricably linked up to the government with its hand over hand consumption of cash. The unspoken transaction would be that in exchange for this funding, the university would bolster the national culture both by producing research (in the forms of technology, knowledge, and cultural product) and students (in the forms of leaders and true Americans). Even universities, departments, and professors that had sympathy with the Communists or were Communists themselves, or even those who simply didn't align themselves with this

narrative of nation building, were complicit in this new institutionalization. Everyone needed money, and in that period, almost all money went back in one way or another to the government and their goal of rebuilding culture and the nation.

Within the goal of building something in the University to support culture was the goal to rebuild culture through the university. Progressive education was one of many signs that national culture was changing, differentiating itself in ways that conservatives were not comfortable with. Society was seen as being in the early stages of splintering within itself, fracturing along the lines of progressivism, race, and gender. The war with the Soviets then not only constituted an additional threat to the destruction of national culture but a justification for the overtly massive reassertion of national culture through the university. "In the heady days of the early Cold War, when a genuine consensus existed regarding the need to stave off Communist advances, the only issue capable of trumping the divisiveness of race and religion was national security. Washington insiders who had been laboring for federal aid immediately recognized Sputnik as a blessing in disguise," (Hartman, 184). For a time, the University could then be trusted, as it was inextricably tied to federal funding, to assert and transmit a universal culture to pupils that could eventually go on to be cultural and political leaders themselves, with the university being a mill of cultural reproduction.

Within the American capitalist context however, this culture was essentially seen as a market one: "[i]n the twentieth century, the United States—the most powerful capitalist country in world history—created an educational system to aid capitalism and fight the Cold War. In grooming a generation of Cold Warriors willing to fight global communism, the American school was central to the United States victory in the Cold

War, and the broader twentieth-century triumph of the capitalistic economic system," (Harman, 197). Intimately tied together with democracy and freedom was the American life of market capitalism, so the defense of the nation and its values became bound with the defense of capitalism. The university was then trusted to defend and reproduce the nation in all of its values, including capitalism and a long American tradition of moral conservatism.

The Vietnam Betrayal

This trust, however, was irreparably broken during the counterculture movements of the 1960s and the Vietnam War. This splintering culture could no longer be contained as it asserted itself not as a fracture but as a self-differentiation, as a new culture immanently emerging from an old one. While the war with the Communists had a semblance of consensus, the war in Vietnam had its foundation continually worn away by detractors. The cold war succeeded partially because it never quite happened. The threat was kept in the abstract, with impending doom always hovering just above reality in a zone of imminent potentiality. The Vietnam War actualized this, but in the process of making this real, material reality asserted its own consequences.

One of these consequences was the circulation of images and understandings of the realities of such a war: "[i]n the Vietnam War, it was the pictures of the children burning and dying from napalm that brought the US public to a sense of shock, outrage, remorse, and grief. These were precisely pictures we were not supposed to see, and they disrupted the visual field and the entire sense of public identity that was built upon that field. The images furnished a reality, but they also showed a reality that disrupted the hegemonic field of representation itself," (Butler, 150). The humanization process of this

discourse corrupted government's ability to represent the war as necessary, as something that absolutely required a consensus of culture for an objective evil to be defeated. The culture behind the war soon remade itself as something against what culture used to be. Reality asserted itself and in that movement, culture's development reestablished itself in an explosive reimagining in the counterculture movements of the 60s. The repression of this development could only lead to its explosive re-creation.

The undercutting of the university was then all but assured during the Vietnam War, wherein the classical great books tradition of humanities education could not withstand what would become a massive cultural civil war. Surely, the vanguard of the patriotic American tradition could only feel betrayed by the university, the university they had always distrusted but had to retain, when the products of these institutions turned not into national leaders but into national rebels. The students of the 60s turned against the very institutions that educated them and against the very nation that raised them. As the university, the bestower of the national higher culture fractured, so did the culture itself. The explosion of the student insurrection left culture in fragments and the university on the brink of a vast change. After the 60s, the Sputnik moment was inconceivable. The idea that we could pour that much money into college and culture building is impossible,

Nostalgia

From this point on, the presence of the nostalgic voice calling for a time past, a time of peace and order and common sense, grew in a fervor that hasn't dissipated much since. Represented by people like Allan Bloom, we hear the constant call for a revitalization of the humanities, which is really a call to reclaim the past. In a sense, the

cultural civil war has never ended, and these memorial thinkers want to return a time to a time of peace. A noble idea perhaps, but it is roughly analogous to a southerner wishing the Civil War had never erupted, in that they do not seek for the problems to be solved but for them to go back to not being mentioned again. This is revealed as these traditionalists hardly disguise their explicit racism and sexism in implicit traditionalism, claiming that

> "the alarming collapse of higher education [was] because of the infiltration of students and professors of color (assumed to be students or scholars only because of preferential admissions or hiring policies, not because of their own abilities), the fearsome power of feminists, and the abandonment of the classics of Western thought (the best of all that has been written) by inferior works by women and people of color (inferior by definition, since they aren't included in collections of the classics of Western thought—the best that has been written, etc.) In this nightmare vision, teachers and students were said to have been silenced and intimidated by the powerful cabal of African Americans, Latinos, feminists, gays, lesbians and who knows what other undesirables who supposedly controlled US higher education," (Weiler, 219).

Traditionalists come close to sounding like conspiracy theorists, blaming the new state of education on the supposed insurrection of these voices of influence. A classic example of this mindset is Allan Bloom, one of the many things he claims being that: "[t]he latest enemy of the vitality of classic texts is feminism. The struggles against elitism and racism in the sixties and seventies had little direct effect on students' relations to books. The democratization of the university helped dismantle its structure and caused it to lose its focus," (Bloom, 65).

We must recognize that this nostalgia is not in fact a call for peace but a return to a safely dominant order, a return to a silencing of these voices. The "focus" Bloom speaks of is not an objective, natural focus but is his focus, the focus of those dominant and those who benefit from the way the system used to be. The nature of tradition and

inertia within ideological formation gives them the illusion of objectivity: "[t]he politics of race and gender within white supremacist patriarchy grants them this 'authority' without their having to name the desire for it," (hooks, 81). The conservatives can then take on the mantle of traditional authority without naming this desire as a political grasp for power, a privilege only granted by way of a history of subjugation and oppression.

It is consistently forgotten that an educational peace or unity never existed but was merely pretended. For example, even during the inception of the university, there were arguments about the German professionalization of literature study in the 1800s (Graff, 55). Professionalization is not a new issue but is one that has existed throughout the history of education, turning up and returning again in different adapted forms depending on the historical context. There has been a constant debate about extrinsic (historical context based) or intrinsic (isolated poetic function based) criticism for a long time. This eventually resulted in there being the creation of a duality between scholars and critics. Even the rough fusion of these two classes in the 50s did not so much combine them as save the historical stuff as advanced extra knowledge for advanced classes.

With a dialectical historical perspective, we can remember that these elements among many, both contradictory and both flipping in dominance, have always existed together. It's not that wholly new ideas have been introduced and taken over like an infection, but that different elements have consumed new ideas and received different levels of prominence in history. Again, the research model we now take as standard was at one point introduced, and even then, strongly contested. This is not to say that all developments emerge immanently but that, analogously to natural evolution, new

energies are taken in (as this is not a closed system) and fresh developments are added to older frames. As environments change, so does the adaptive potential of certain functions. Evolution is always a compromise between the future and the past; both must be studied to understand the present (and similarly in both cases, this is not a linear progression of betterment but a historical development of adaptability, not what is the fittest but what can fit best).

Even in the traditional past dominated by the old books program, there was some eye toward preparing students for a life of work, though that work was preordained to be of the dominant order. And even now, there is still some, though dying, idea that graduates of college leave more cultured, an intellectualism that is both revered and despised in common American culture. Americans have the contradictory notion that one should ascend to a higher culture but those that have ascended are usually pretentious scholars or snobs. Even when it comes to specialized sets of knowledges, the laboring businessman will always have the last word with his common sense over the academic and their book learning. Though this kind of hands on work has dissipated in recent history, or at least those that do it rarely ever reach the publicity of the top, this still holds sway in the American mind. Knowledge is not supposed to come through research or experience with a multiplicity of people, but is supposed to come from a source inside, a wellspring of pure rationality that is not created but honed by disciplined hard work.

It is the nostalgia of humanists now that erase this always-unstable discourse to replace it with a supposedly ideal past. The humanities and the university in general has always been a thing up for debate, constantly in a state of mutability according to the forces of fashions of the time. Any perception otherwise is simply nostalgia. Any defense

of the humanities must in itself be a reconstruction, a creation of a new humanities for a new future. Though we need not abandon everything in the past simply because it has passed, our perspective must be aimed toward the future, revitalizing and recreating based on what will work now.

A Last Gasp

Going forward, we can see this war cry for the revitalization and transformation of culture is actually the last gasp of a culture corroded from the inside by capitalism. Fitting for America, that the last cry its national culture could respond to was the rally for battle. After the Soviets fell and during the shuddering foundation of the Vietnam War, the universities were left with little but the echoes, their sound imprinting on the future ideology that the universities were to have. They were left with a languishing respect for the humanities and for cultural initiation and a newfound drive toward the positivistic, rational, instrumental, and technological. As Marx reminds us in *Capital*, even during moments of radical change, the situation is always built on the vestiges of the past, but in this case the machinery of reproduction is the collegiate machinery of cultural reproduction. Left with the tools of the old order, a new order was made both in its image and in a reflection. The roots of education always nourished themselves on the culture, even as it changed, of the American superstructure. But it wasn't long until this soil soon became arid and dry, and the roots had to find another source of justification. Ultimately, the Sputnik moment signaled a point wherein the United States dove headfirst into the neoliberal course of restricting culture to markets and demanding that the university in particular produce value in the form of market exchange value, not use or cultural value.

The betrayal of national culture by the university in Vietnam and the era of

counterculture then constitute a unique moment in this historical construction. Despite the always-divisive nature of history, the university had always been predicated on national culture. "In its attempt to construct and conceptualize the school, philosophy has oscillated between positioning the school as a propaedeutic, as a prophylactic preparation for society, and positioning the school as microcosm, as a mini-society. Despite this oscillation, philosophy has remained constant with regard to one basic proposition: we school to set the city-state right," (Feltham, 68). The internal debate between whether the university should practically prepare students for reality or create their own model reality, a translation of the struggle between the university as being a path to society or as a self contained reinforcement of such a society, was then collapsed beneath an external debate on the very nature of whether one should support the national city-state at all.

Though the nostalgic voices call for a history that has never quite been unified, the counterculture represents a moment wherein that unity cannot even be pretended, wherein culture is overtly divided against itself. This is a chance for radical re-creation and re-imagining or an evil that must be quelled, defeated, and repressed. We must move forward into the brave unknown or neutralize the threat of the future and reestablish the past as a permanent present. Fredric Jameson largely agrees with this definition of cultural revolution, describing it as "that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life," (Jameson, 95). In the counterculture, invisible contradictions became visible and overt, these contradictions becoming the focal point of life. We must then examine whether or not the university used this contradiction as a way to move forward or as a conflict to repress and ignore. As Hartman warns

however: "[e]ducational struggles were dialectical: education was not the pure instrument of the ruling class, it was a stake in a very bitter and continuous class struggle. Liberty and order were mutually constitutive components of education. […] But inequality tended to win out over democracy, reproduction over transformation, domination over deliverance, reification over utopia," (199). The past can never be purely viewed in any way, but Hartman shows that with modern progress, the trend has been dominated by a particular direction.

Culture and Identity

The Struggle To Define Culture

Before moving on, we have to define something that resists definition - the word culture. “Culture” was understood as something the university could found itself on, but that foundation has now changed. To understand this more clearly, we need to understand culture.

“Culture” is a word most people would attest to understanding but be unable to define. It's one of many concepts of which the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein would argue that a definition does not constitute its meaning. “Culture” certainly means something, but it cannot be defined in terms of an absolutely common meaning: "these phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all," (Wittgenstein, 35). Rather, it functions more on the basis of familial resemblance, wherein no characteristics are universally shared, but there is a certain system of common recognition. There is not a strict category that delimits what is and what is not culture but a "family of cases" (Wittgenstein, 72) that bears the commonality of resemblance but with no particular feature common to all. His classic example of this is the concept of "game," wherein no absolutely common idea can link such games as chess, baseball, and tag. This does not leave us in a void of vagueness but rather forces us to rely on the fluidity of recognition, something we already do quite well. Wittgenstein is the anti-philosopher of philosophers, telling us to think less and look more. Though we are about to launch into an analysis of the ways culture manifests itself, we must remember the need to occasionally step back, look around, and know that though we don't know what culture is exactly we know it when we see it.

It will be my contention that the reason culture is so hard to define is because it is not a concept with a specific content but is in fact a relational concept that only exists with any conceptual clarity when in it's in tension. Instead of deducing its parameters, we'll have to design our own model for culture and see how it weathers our recognitions of culture's variations. The point is not to confine culture to strict limits but to design a schema that can explain its various permutations.

I'd like to position culture as a mutable but ultimately hierarchal structure. As Marx said, the precondition for all life is the means and reproduction of the means of subsistence, so around this core cell, culture grows. In a sense, culture is that "everything else" around the economic center, with varying amounts of specificity based on whom you ask. Of course, we don't want to get into the trap of something like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, wherein certain needs such as shelter and hunger must be solved before one can contemplate or care about culture. We must more recognize that "[t]he ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production," (Althusser, 100) and what conditions are being reproduced here are essentially cultural.

Economic subsistence is a necessary precondition but the model for its continuation always already exists for the subjects engaged in it. Culture itself too, exists alongside as well as on top of the economic foundation. This vagueness only becomes clear during confrontation, as culture becomes something recognizable only when it is in conflict or tension with itself, other cultures, persons or communities within it, or the economic base.

We know from Raymond Williams that the base and superstructure (roughly, the

economic foundation and the societal building) are not as hierarchal as the terms imply. Both the base and superstructure are processes embedded in a historical struggle; they are not continuous states that retain a kind of metaphysical order. Dialectically, they contradict each other and in so doing develop each other in various ways, pushing against each other, flipping subordinate and dominant roles, etc. Though they certainly take the roles of structures, they are not wholly determining forces: "[w]e have to revalue 'determination' towards the setting of limits and the exertion of pressure, and away from a predicted, prefigured, and controlled content," (Williams, 6). The narrative that the base and superstructure struggle with each other to impose is not one that forces its players to read from a script, but rather impels them and incentivizes them to act, see, and think in certain ways.

Along these lines, we must remember to drop the vulgar interpretation of Marx and the base/superstructure theory as economic determinism: "[w]e have to revalue 'superstructure' towards a related range of cultural practices, and away from a reflected, reproduced or specifically dependent content. And, crucially, we have to revalue 'the base' away from the notion of a fixed economic or technological abstraction, and towards the specific activities of men in real social and economic relationships, containing fundamental contradictions and variations and therefore always in a state of dynamic process," (Williams, 6). To cordon off the base and superstructure from each other is to make a metaphysical mistake, to assume that this methodological dichotomy is actually a material one. What we must remember instead is that this duality is primarily a tool for analysis and that between these two structures, there is a vast multiplicity of mediatory layers.

Recognizing that there is a deep interplay of interactions between the superstructure and the base, we must continue on with a focus on analyzing the superstructure, the container of culture that will frame our discussion of humanities education. Superstructure has what Althusser would call a "relative autonomy" in relationship to the base. Neither is merely a reflection of the other and both are "overdetermined" by the other to be shaped in certain ways. Suffice to say, this complex relationship cannot be reduced to a merely causal one. Culture both stands with the economic base and apart from it, dependent and independent.

It is this tension of contradiction that begins to define it. Still, we are left with a foundation but no identifiable building. It's as this point we have to let go of the foundation/building metaphor, as we try to understand the dialectical structure not only between culture and economy but between culture and itself. Culture is ever-present but only exists with any power and clarity when it's in tension, a tension that is largely produced by culture's essential grip on the past and history's continual development, a tension between the maintenance of old meanings and the creation of new ones. As Raymond Williams diagrammed, culture is constituted through the interplay of movements, one being dominant and two beneath being residual and emergent. Culture becomes clearer as tensions arise among the three. Fundamentally, there is a dialectical tension between what is and what could be, whether that “could be” is a call to the past or a call to the future and whether each actually opposes the present or merely provides an alternative is to be discovered in practice.

Despite working from Marx's foundation, the positing of economic subsistence as the foundation of all life, we must remember that it does not precede culture. There is no

ahistorical point wherein humans fought to survive but then struggled to make that survival meaningful. Economic subsistence only precedes cultural meaning in a methodological sense, in that meaning must be founded on survival and that this basis of subsistence is the center around which culture forms. It deviates from it in a multiplicity of ways due to the vast differences produced by historical development, but it is the basis upon which all things can be traced.

Ever-present Culture

People are conceived and born always already in culture. There is no ahistorical or acultural human nature outside of history and general human development. Hegel based his entire philosophy on the idea that consciousness is always developing in the course of history, and each instance of consciousness in the form of a human being is a product of this history, an instance of something universal. Marx's genius turn was to replace the spirit with material reality itself and show that historical development does not need an absolute spirit developing through it but that humanity itself, humanity alone, works with reality to develop themselves.

Just as there is no human outside of history, there is no human outside of culture: "men unmodified by the customs of particular places do not in fact exist, have never existed, and most important, could not in the very nature of the case exist," (Geertz, 35). Any concept of human nature that is "purified" from the "containment" of external, social influences has no grounding in material human life: "there is no such thing as human nature independent of culture," (Geertz, 49). Such ideas as social contract theory posit an ahistorical state when people fought amongst themselves in a "state of nature" wherein the human nature of savagery was displayed until an powerful group of humans together

demanded a coherent social structure that forced organization. Such ideas can still work as thought exercises to elucidate some ideas on values, but it cannot work as a basis of human nature because it is ahistorical, not in the shallow sense that such a state didn't materially exist, but in the deeper sense that this and theories like it do not take into account the essential development of history itself.

The elements that constitute this historical process are essentially semiotic. What culture is then, is a multiplicitous web of signification. Echoing Max Weber, Clifford Geertz defines this cultural development of signification as the weaving of a web, man being "an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun" (5). This web is artificially created, always being the result of human historical development, but always disguised in the form of naturality. This is largely because people are always born into a cultural role before being conscious of their active power, although there is also a dominant active force that seeks to reproduce a certain norm that benefits them.

"Culture" then "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life," (Geertz, 89). This understanding of culture captures the Wittgensteinian vagueness of culture as a concept while retaining a methodological clarity. These signs are not some merely abstract quantity but are observable, public, and essentially social nodes of meaning: "[t]hey are all symbols, or at least symbolic elements, because they are tangible formulations of notions, abstractions from experience fixed in perceptible forms, concrete embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgments, longings, or beliefs… Cultural acts, the construction, apprehension, and utilization of symbolic forms, are social events like

any other; they are as public as marriage and as observable as agriculture," (Geertz, 91). These signs are not abstract notions set over and against reality but are embedded within and throughout the very constitution of reality itself as a process of lived life. With this understanding, culture can then be wide but clear, mutable but not indefinable, general but meaningful.

Culture lends itself to being casted as natural because it is always already present, an artificial but organic system that one is born into and realized in. If one were simply born tabula rasa into this system and were capable of confronting it, the force it would take to convince the vast majority of people this state is natural would have to be incredible. This process is eased because people are not only born within culture but realize themselves in it, meaning that their identity as human beings are constructed from the significance of culture itself: "[b]ecoming human is becoming individual, and we become individual under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives," (Geertz, 52). Within this external form for identification, individuals then find an externally provided cell around which to grow themselves: "Individuals find in them a culture which shapes to a large degree their tastes and opportunities, and which provides an anchor for their self identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging," (Margalit, 83). Each birth is in a sense the creation of another in a multiplicity of nodes within a vast web of human signification.

Within this web, all of reality is woven in a historical development of significance. At different times, different things are valued that compose different cultures, so at different times, different kinds of people are conceived. The basis of

historical materialism founds itself in the idea that not only is economic subsistence historical but that everything in life is historical. If it were only the economy, people would have the freedom to confront culture with a decent degree of clarity, but all of life in the form of culture is part of their realizations as individuals so identity itself is a cultural product. "Individual well-being depends on the successful pursuit of worthwhile goals and relationships. Goals and relationships are culturally determined. Being social animals means not merely that the means for the satisfaction of people's goals are more readily available within society. More crucially it means that those goals themselves are (when one reaches beyond what is strictly necessary for biological survival) the creatures of society, the products of culture," (Margalit, 83). In Geertz's terms: "We are, in sum, incomplete or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture–and not through culture in general but through highly particular forms of it…" (49). This wording trends toward reading it linearly, that man exists and then finishes in external realization but we must retain the understanding that this realization is always already occurring. Man is never incomplete in these terms, always completing himself in his own actualized realization.

Identity

If man is necessarily a creature that must extend itself to operate in life, then man is necessarily a social creature. Because of this, the historical production of man is the production of humans determined by a cultural milieu of signification, and, as Geertz asserts: "[s]uch symbols are thus not mere expressions, instrumentalities, or correlates of our biological, psychological, and social existence; they are perquisites of it. Without

men, no culture, certainly; but equally, and more significantly, without culture, no men," (Geertz, 49). Culture and man are not merely connected but essentially constitutive of one another.

Of course, we must resist the vulgar materialist notion that men are but machines put together by the assembly line of history, because men themselves have an active hand in the construction of their history. However, each man is always preceded by men in general so that whatever they are born into and whatever they may try to interpret, reject, or change is always something created by historical development. Language itself is a product and process of human history that the individual must realize itself in. Analogous to the rest of culture, one must first learn language before one can articulate the fact that one has learned it. Culture always precedes the self-consciousness of culture and thus necessity always precedes freedom. The very capability of articulation in an individual is predicated on culture. Even as one speaks about culture, one always speaks within it.

The individual thus constitutes itself as variably active assimilator of a certain set of cultural products it was predetermined it could consume. Try as one might, no one can now realize themselves as a Victorian era gentleman or a Renaissance era man because the cultural context, the language in which to make an utterance, no longer exists. That said, there is no particular general culture within which anyone at any time constitutes oneself. Culture varies from epoch to epoch, from nation to nation, from household to household, in manifold stark or subtle ways so that the very narratives of defining human life are in a constant stage of change: "the determinate form the larger social situation takes can itself vary, for different societies can build into their own organization a wide variety of different 'narratives' for defining human social life," (Russon, 69). “Narrative”

is then an apt metaphor to describe this because it contains the historical direction of humans and humanity in development while defining linguistic parameters to any individual utterance, which has some but not complete freedom.

Culture, even as it is a vast social web, is also a process of individuation, as the realization of one's self involves finding a way to articulate one's own identity within this varying cultural system. To understand culture, one must understand the ways it is individuated: "[b]ehavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behavior–or, more precisely, social action–that cultural forms find articulation," (Geertz, 17). Each behavior is then a socially determined act, a space defined by society and shaped by the individual wherein narrative is honed: "it is as an appropriation of one's society's narratives that one develops a sense of who one is. It is as a social member that one is someone–that one can be recognized by one's others, and thereby recognize oneself, as someone…" (Russon, 71). The establishment of one's individuality depends on the appropriation and individuated use of one's sociality.

This sociality comes at us in many forms, and, especially when discussing race, gender, and class, these forms are often combined where these three “particular stands of social relations and ideological practices of difference and power are seen as arising in their own specific social terrain, and then crisscrossing each other 'intersectionally' or aggregatively. It is a coming together of social issues to create a moment of social experience," (Bannerji, 144). Concepts like intersectionality show how one's experience is constituted by a variety of social experiences intersecting together. Essential to this though is the recognition that despite this vastly uneven distribution of experiential terrains, for each individual, "[t]heir sense of being in the world, textured through myriad

social relations and cultural forms, is lived or felt or perceived as being all together and all at once," (Bannerji, 144). Though this experience can become fragmented into discontinuity by conflicting contact with the social world, the basic mode of lived being is one of continuity. Identity functions as individuation.

An essential idea for understanding how one composes oneself in such a cultural context is the idea of narrative, which was alluded to previously. Freed from the confines of writing, narrative is essentially the process by which an experience is given a particular direction and form. Though it is not exclusively relegated to memory, one can get a sense of it by recalling a past event and realizing that only some facets of this continuous stream of life were safe from the proverbial cutting room floor. Narrative is always a process of writing, reading, and rewriting wherein the constant influx of life is honed and shaped into a narrative that can be comprehended, into a particular role from which one can realize and articulate oneself as a meaning maker and meaning center.

As Fredric Jameson says, narrative is "the central function or instance of the human mind," (13). While the senses are constantly absorbing and interpreting a torrential barrage of raw information, the human mind creates its meaning by a process of selection and organization, an articulation of individuated signification. Again, we must keep in mind that these individual articulations always take place within the context of a wider social language, so no identity is pure and free, but neither is it wholly determined. Culture and identity are much like two sets of filters wherein the individual is a collection of ever specified information: "[f]amiliarity with a culture determines the boundaries of the imaginable. Sharing in a culture, being part of it, determines the limits of the feasible," (Margalit, 83). Identity is always in tension with culture but the culture

ultimately determines the limits of imaginable resistance and difference.

John Russon describes this conflict and cooperation in detail:

> "The demand with which one's situation confronts one when growing up, then, is to learn from it who one is going to be by interpreting its portrayal of who we are. This context of other people calls upon one to be a specific sort of person and learning who one will be is the process of finding a place for oneself within its narrative, which amounts to taking on its traditions while transforming them in a way that allows them to fit one's own new and developing situation. The institutions by which we carry on the memory of who we are and the vision of who we will be–the family first, but others as we become integrated into a larger social life–educate each of us into who each of us is, which means they teach us what there is, how to behave, and so on; in short, they articulate for us the parameters of our human world," (70).

Within the form and formatting power of narrative, that which is already determined as socially significant takes on the shape of being personally significant. In other words, there are a multitude of gradations to this filtering system, such as family and neighborhood as well as intersecting ones such as religion and ethnicity. To retain a methodological coherence retaining a dialectical tension however, it will be clearest to focus on culture and identity.

The human condition is to be birthed in ignorance, and in that ignorance, to be little more than siphons for the surrounding sign, casts to be filled with certain modes of being. Even as we mature to take a more active part in this self-development, the material around us that can be used to construct our selves is limited. Fundamentally, it all originates in the social world, from a system of intersubjective and interconnected values that we soon find our own place within. In this sense, the development of our own personal narrative is like stitching ourselves to an ever-growing cloth, weaving from the material around and achieving definition by attaching to this collective material. To function as any kind of particular individual, we must gain a particular corresponding

social recognition: "human interpreters–free, self determining, bodily agents–are fundamentally involved in an intersubjective project of mutual recognition or confirmation, and that it is this that provides the core to the formation of our identities, whether healthy or neurotic. The real substance of our lives is to be found in our dealings with other people," (Russon, 51). Even for a characteristic like independence, we only learn what it is through intersubjective signs and build this identity through the replication of these same signs in us. Our identities are always enmeshed in a dense system of interconnected intersubjectivity, so "to be a person is to be involved in a struggle to establish a secure sense of oneself, a sense that can be mutually recognized by both me and that other," (Russon, 55).

Body As Mediator

To be clear, this is not a spiritual, idealist description of a web of being uniting us. Rather, this is, despite appearances, a material account. To understand this, we need to understand the manner of transmission for these signs, which is through the body. First, we need to remind ourselves that there is no individual before the social, that there is no tabula rasa introduction. Second, we must know that life is lived continuously, and that, despite our memories, despite our conscious narratives, there is a constant barrage of life being lived streaming through our selves. At no point do we stop, able to pause things and take a look at what to assimilate as if looking at a menu. We are always already immersed in our life that is itself immersed in the lives of others.

Our selves are inherently permeable layers, else we would not be able to absorb our culture and build our identities as readily as we do. That being said, not all of this or even very much must be done through the conscious mind. Just as the self must use

material from culture, so must the mind use material from something outside. Again, this is not some unconscious spirit that glides along one's brain like a phantom, lest we would then have to figure out how something ideal attaches itself to something material. Rather, we have to look to the body. Here, the body is not strictly restrained by flesh but by everything that is also bodily, in other words, that which falls below the level of consciousness. It is a semiotics that can only make itself known through mediation, that only exists and functions by way of the fact that it cannot be symbolized and thus understood as we would understand something consciously.

As culture and identity are texts being written with the signs around them, so is the body a text always being written by the life within and without it. The process of living itself, in a much more concentrated way, is the language by which the body is inscribed and then articulates itself. In his phenomenological psychological study of human experience, John Russon shows how narrative is to be an embodied action through the process of living life:

> "[s]uch narratives are the intersubjective equivalent of the original determinacies–the hands and the mouth–with which the organic body is born; they provide the fundamental categories–the basic grasps–of intersubjective space by which the child can negotiate her dealings with others and with her own sense of itself. The child, thus, must develop a sense of things–a narrative–that meshes with the way 'we' are narrated to her through the behavior of the others," (66).

These intersubjective narratives then take on a material substance through the embodiment of feelings and inclination resulting from the individual enmeshed in the openness of sociality: "each one of us is 'embodied' in a specific set of narrative practices, and we can see how these (different) practices are in fact routes by which–and the only routes by which–individuals can develop for themselves both a self identity and a sense of that self identity," (72). The conscious self, the identity, then establishes itself through

a social realization of embodiment. The body constantly imbibes a narratively motivated set of feelings, emotional and textural, and reproduces those feelings through the mediation of conscious awareness. Life always seeks to reproduce that which engenders life, and, through the body, life replicates itself. Narrative then passively establishes itself and retrospectively solidifies into conscious realization.

To organize this vast understanding, we have to bring in Bourdieu's concept of the habitus. Without it, we would be left stranded, absolutely immersed in an ocean of feeling that our body somehow reproduces with some design. Bourdieu gave us a blue print for such a design by way of his analysis of the habitus. The habitus is essentially a mutable, mobile, ever adapting, ever subsuming constellation of habits: “[t]he ‘choices' of the habitus [...] are accomplished without consciousness or constraint, by virtue of the dispositions which, although they are unquestionably the product of social determinisms, are also constituted outside the spheres of consciousness and constraint,” (51). What survives is what is repeated. Habits build upon themselves, solidifying and congealing with time and repetition. This repetition creates patterns that exist beyond any singular action, these strong or weakly reinforced patterns folding into feelings, which further motivate this link between the body and the conscious mind. Habits speak in the language of feelings; they take up what is around them from repetition (for we must remember that, as in music, there is no such thing as a continuous state but a state so consistently recreated that it appears continuous, a note repeated so often one cannot hear the spaces in between) and articulate their utterance in feelings.

Feelings are generally what governs one's "sense of place" (Bourdieu, 82), the essential layer of mediation between an individual and reality. Despite positivistic

concerns to the contrary, this layer cannot be merely removed as if it were a shroud covering our eyes. They are the very tools, among others of course, with which we interpret reality. While we may be able to conceptualize much of what we do, feelings constitute the spaces around our concepts, the auras in which they glow. Feelings then constitute the structure of thought with thought being the content.

Feelings emerge consciously in a number of ways, none of them distinctly clear from another but broadly categorizable as emotions and inclinations. Both mobilize our consciousness in certain ways, always set to repeat and reconstruct habits and ways of being unless there is critical, conscious intervention. The body is the closest thing to a central mediator for the outside and the inside as we can get. It is constantly being bombarded with the totality of raw sensory information; that which is focused on with awareness becomes conceptualized, that which is repeated becomes embodied in sediments of habit, and that which is merely negligible either lying dormant waiting for enough habit to make it repeatable or tossed to the wayside as one cuts through life.

Culture Over Identity

This process of consumption is mirrored by a process of reproduction, a reproduction that constitutes the social self (the identity by which we are recognized) as it interacts with the social world. Interposed between the self and non-self is a thick layer of mediation so dense that it cannot be parsed, constituting an absolute immersion. Through reproduction into this layer, human action is sedimented and ossified into systems, institutions that cement themselves into external cultures. Even as people always already exist within this cementation, the externality of this culture is paramount as these cultural and systematic patterns of information "lie outside the boundaries of the individual

organism as such in that intersubjective world of common understandings into which all human individuals are born, in which they pursue their separate careers, and which they leave persisting behind them after they die," (Russon, 92). Culture always exists in an intersubjective space that is both external to humanity but in which humanity is constantly and essentially immersed.

In agreement with Marx, though there is a dialectical contradiction between self-determination and external determination in this immersion, the dominant aspect of this contradiction is external. Geertz modifies the identity model as it is translated into culture, arguing that “culture is best seen not as complexes of concrete behavior patterns–customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters–as has, by and large, been the case up to now, but as a set of control mechanisms–plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call 'programs')–for the governing of behavior," (Geertz, 44). Culture is ultimately the container of identity and sets the parameters for its realization so in its realization within the individual, it is not only an embodiment of narrative repetition but is the external determination of that embodiment by way of externally motivated prescriptions. Culture has the generative power of motivation, of a prescription for behavioral feasibility and action. Culture defines the individual before the individual defines culture.

Dialectally, we reconstruct our personal narratives based on our feelings, feelings that have themselves been generated both by a culture around us and by environments that we have influenced ourselves. Feelings and identity are then always in tension, recreating and reconstructing themselves, adapting themselves to themselves. At our core, humanity is not composed of any one nature but is constantly remaking itself in

tension with that is within and what is without. We feel inclined to do one thing and justify it with a conscious narrative, a narrative that can then plot a course for its further repetition. We are socially determined, whether familiarly or culturally, to repeat a certain action, way of thought, or way of feeling, and it becomes an embodied sensation, a sensation from which we craft our personal narrative and the understanding of the social narrative in which it fits.

Here we can see that there is then an essential need for mutability because, as Marx said, man is nothing if not a historically situated animal. This complex system of interlocking mediatory semiotic layers cannot lay at rest, and thus cannot be completely analyzed, because man is at the same time in a constant state of individual and collective development, not always in an upward direction but at least in a forward one. As Walter Benjamin notes, the vast development of history funnels all the way down to individual sense perception: "[d]uring long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well," (Benjamin, 222). To understand this analysis of the human not only as a signifying creature dialectically constructing itself between culture and identity but as a historically developing being in such a process is to understand that the mutability of these vast complexes of signs change with time and circumstance.

These changes do not merely occur in the overt forms of culture but occur down to the very sense perceptions of individuals, always constituted and directed toward the social space in which they were conceived: “[t]he categories of perception of the social

world are essentially the product of the incorporation of the objective structures of the social space," (Bourdieu, 235). Despite the vast complexity of this structure, it does, with time, change throughout history, and, in that change, it changes us, and through that change, we change it. History itself is the grandest stage for this dialectical development of humanity, ever expanding and ever changing.

Introduction of Ideology

Despite this seemingly vast, complex edifice of human historical construction, our understanding of it can be shaken to the very core by a simple ingredient: the element of wrongness, the idea that any such signified representation of society can exist through ideological adherence rather than actual accordance with material reality. The possibility of any such sign, any such node in this multiplicitous web of being wrong makes the entire thing tremble, makes what seemed to be an abstract diagram into a political struggle.

When Marx accuses such things as religion and proponents of political economy as having a "false consciousness," he is truly making a radical, if not original or unfounded, claim. Though we may have implicitly drawn a picture of signs being in some sort of harmonic coherence, with tension being merely a methodological term, friction does often emerge from these systems at any point along their course, in feelings of wrongness, in conscious claims of wrongness, in narratives that try to cut a true path, and cultural narratives that try to purify themselves of incorrect elements. At any point, at any sign, two humans can meet across it in conflict. In these intersubjective spaces, any person or group can demand the recognition that the other is wrong, the difficulty being that both sides, while working within different sign spaces, can only use signs against one

another.

There is a material reality deeply, deeply embedded beneath these signs, but social reality always trumps it. The human historical edifice built on material reality always shapes it in an artificial way. For instance, though nature can equally starve and feed a person, it is only within particular historical situations that people are alternately full or hungry. At this moment right now, there is enough on the planet to supply the world with food, but it is not equally distributed. Though the content is made of material reality, the situation is designed artificially. What exists is always being manipulated to exist in a certain way. Any accusation of falsity then builds at least some part of its veracity from social construction.

Here, we begin to see that any theory of ideology lies somewhere in between individual identity and collective cultures. Ideology cannot be that which is merely false but must be too something somewhere in between any duality of wrongness and rightness. The very definition of whatever may or not be ideological will itself change with time and perspective, always within the sway of sociality. The question becomes, within this vast social construction, is there any room left for the concept of ideology?

Ideology is a concept that resists definition. It has been in popularity and disrepute depending on the fashion of the time, fluctuating until it has expanded to fill everything and consuming itself until it meant nothing. Proponents of its use want a term that refers specifically enough for it to be significant but detractors always seem capable of puncturing the concept until it deflates. Any definition seems liable to being either too limited or too wide, either pointing too specifically to be generalizable or stretching so far as to lose meaningful reference.

Ideology tends to fall to one of two sides, leaning too hard on what I have now defined as the poles of identity and culture. Generally, identity theories tend to posit the individual as the locus of ideology, with ideology not merely being an illusion upon the person but actually constituting the individual's identity. Ideology is then reduced down to a core that subsumes the individual and everything in its perception, losing its bearing without specificity. Opposite to this, culture theories generally tend to posit the external cultural situation as ideological, as particular systems become the loci of ideologies while they implant these ideologies upon the individual. While identity theory subsumes agency, culture theory consumes it; while identity theory absorbs the social, culture theory stretches it.

Neither of these general theoretical methodologies is satisfying, and both are liable to being too limited or too general. The schema I will design does not so much strike entirely new ground but widen the conception of old grounds, namely by taking identity and culture and putting them in conversation with each other. If they are each liable to fall into metaphysical calcification, then they can rupture and free each other if put in a dialectical discourse.

In my analysis, ideology functions as a dialectical mediator between culture and identity. Ideology does not have a specific form or shape but operates within the historical space between culture and identity, themselves spaces for social signs. Even as we try to bring clarity to it, it is this obscurity that makes it difficult to clarify. It is this unstable movement between these spaces that make other definitions limited. We can even claim that this very definitional obscurity works in its favor, for whatever theory of ideology one may be working with, one must certainly agree that it does not want to be

found out as such.

Due to its existence in the dialectical tension of culture and identity, we have to understand ideology through its constraints. Both culture and identity function through the assimilation of content, throughout the consumption and reproduction of social signs individualized, recreated, and returned. As historical life processes, they can become congealed or mutable depending on particular developments. As opposed to ideology however, culture and identity, as opposite poles, retain a certain self-conscious mutability that ideology doesn't. Culture is at enough distance from the individual to recognize that it can change, that it exists differently for different people, not just in other parts of the world but for people with different positions in it. Identity exists with enough closeness for each person to know that it changes; its history inherently exists within the history of a lifetime. Though we may be able to sustain some sort of coherent narrative throughout our existence, we can never deny twists and turns in its plot; though we can deny improvements or regressions we cannot deny that they do exist. Ultimately, what is ideological is what resists this self-conscious history.

What becomes calcified and resists self-consciousness is then not any specific content but the very structure of social reality. "The dominance of the bourgeoisie and of its ideology is not expressed in the content of the knowledge but in the structure of the environment in which it is transmitted," (Ranciére, 6). Ideology does not exist within any idea but between, in the spaces between contents. It is the very frame of what is that determines ideology. While everything is historical and in those terms artificial, human, and mutable, ideology is unique in that it is all those things without appearing that way (the closest we will get to "false consciousness"). Instead, it is overdetermined by its

opposing sides from culture and identity.

The dense network of signs we are encased in is not an even immersion but loosens and tightens in different areas, looser by the edges of culture and identity and tightest at its middle of ideology. By constituting itself as the shape, the frame, the structure of content, ideology takes on a sense of firmness by its function of mediation between those two contents. By taking on the weight of upholding both poles, in a sense, almost everything, the heaviness contracts it with an unconscious stability. Ideology then gains a mutability of content because any part of culture and identity can become ideological when it takes on the stability of form. Once any aspect of culture or identity congeals into being conceived as a natural structure rather than an artificial content, it becomes ideological. When ideas lose their sense of being distinct things to be contemplated and interpreted but instead reify into filtering structures of perception, they become ideological.

Further, as Geertz says, "[t]he function of ideology is to make an autonomous politics possible by providing the authoritative concepts that render it meaningful, the suasive images by means of which it can be sensibly grasped," (Geertz, 218). Ideology is the reification of a seemingly autonomous system that, through the creation and reproduction of authoritative concepts, conditions the reception of its own meaning. Ideology is that which slips through the perception of reality as relation and illusorily stands on its own as objective.

This objectivity is then supported by a dominant class (as Marx legendarily said) who are always already the dominant disseminators of ideas, the ones in the position to back up the claim that their ideologies are objective. "Typically, those with

power assert that their narratives are objective because they are reiterating commonly held beliefs. To be objective effectively limits one's basis of knowledge to commonly held beliefs about what is true and the accepted means for deriving those truths. Objectivity takes a position which serves to silence," (Zamudio, 5). This objectivity is traded among people not as a fantastic revelation or rigorous scientific conclusion but as common sense. In a vast culture of exclusions, the one thing we are all supposedly included on is the recognition of ideology as obvious. Gramsci called common sense the philosophy of non-philosophers, the a priori objective answer to any question that sought to push past conservative values. It's always effective because it is disguised as obvious, with anything opposing it as obscure. Louis Althusser calls this function of making something appear obvious the "elementary ideological effect" (Althusser, 129). Common sense always has the upper hand because social reality is already suited to understanding it. New visions do not have that privilege. Still, people will cling to their common sense as fact, ignoring the simple idea that ideology will of course never overtly reveal itself, that "ideology never says 'I am ideological,'" (Althusser, 131).

For instance, capitalism itself is not an ideological idea but for many, it has solidified into something natural and unquestionable, a framework within which we can make reforms but a structure that we cannot question because of its supposed naturalness; that is ideology. We must remember too that ideology, while still being a negative term, does not imply that anything in its bound is the worst of the worst. There are plenty of harmful ideas within the bounds of culture and identity as well; just because we have reached a historical stage where we can step back and contemplate certain ideas doesn't mean they aren't harmful. At this point in time for example, we have made great progress

in being able to critically think about modern sexuality, making specific progress for homosexual people (though always best progress for white men), and even though we can contemplate formerly ideological things with more distance, those who hold these ideas are still harmful. Anti-gay sentiments become no less damaging once they are loosened from the grip of general ideology, although their collective political effectiveness does get eroded.

To bring it back into a narrative context, ideology is the narrative that defies its own narratology. Ideological texts "come before us as the always-already-read; we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretations, or—if the text is brand-new—through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions," (Jameson, 9). Within these vast intersections of narratives between identity and culture, every reaction and act constitutes an act of reading and rewriting, not an act pure from context but an act always within a changing context. Ideology is that which pretends itself already read, a text that rebels against its own textuality. To overextend the metaphor a bit, ideology is text that wraps itself around other text in order to seem like a cover, as if it were merely the natural and necessary frame for containing the text within.

Ideology as Aesthetics

Identities are constructed within culture, using the cultural set of languages as building pieces from which to construct individualized articulations. At the same time, there are dominant, residual, and emergent cultural narratives running on top of these personal ones. Personal narratives interlock with these cultural narratives but rarely in exact correspondence. Narratives conflict and often run counter to each other, as

everyday human conflict shows. Each narrative tries to resolve these intersubjective conflicts within its own bounds, as the capability of revision can justify a certain narrative inertia. The goal is always coherence, so that even when things get nonsensical, the narrative can be written in retrospect to make sense of the world.

Any narrative, being what Jameson would call an "aesthetic act," "is to be grasped as the imaginary resolution of a real contradiction," (Jameson, 77). Narratives are then essentially aesthetic acts because their ultimate goal is not a rational or scientific or philosophical product but a coherent, symmetrical, beautiful product. Some sort of coherence must be drawn between one's personal identity narrative and the outside cultural narratives. Despite a multiplicity of small term conflicts, there must be brought an ultimate resolution, not a resolution on one's deathbed but a constant activity of resolution that happens at almost every moment. Even during and immediately after tragic moments of great discontinuity, the first effort of the human mind is to bring it back into coherence, back into a realm of understanding, of justification – it is this reliance on structure which is inherently ideological, because life itself is not coherent, not harmonious, not beautiful. In order for such an aesthetic act to occur, ideology must be engaged with in order to repress what is discontinuous, dissonant, and ugly about life so that one can pretend it is beautiful in order to sustain the structured narratives that one has committed to but would ultimately conflict with each other and/or material reality if one became truly self conscious of it.

The desire for coherence is essentially an aesthetic desire and "the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal

‘solutions’ to unresolvable social contradictions," (Jameson, 79). Ideology is then that which merely makes aesthetic resolutions to real contradictions, making inherently contradictory material social texts imaginatively resolved. Ideology is what "enables men to live their relation to their conditions of existence," (Ranciére, 8). As Marx said so long ago on the topic of religion, it is the "sigh of the oppressed creature," the rationalization a subjugated person must enact in order to live their life.

Further, ideology defines this resolution in a way that motivates people to commit to it as they are subjected to its subscription. Ideology "names the structure of situations in such a way that the attitude contained toward them is one of commitment," (Geertz, 231). The very structure of reality is named, made understandable and communicable, through the acceptance of a commitment to it. Commitment is then cemented through the cutting away and making unthinkable of other situations by the severing of externality, of context:

> "the literary work or cultural object, as though for the first time, brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction. It articulates its own situation and textualizes it, thereby encouraging and perpetuating the illusion that the situation itself did not exist before it, that there is nothing but a text, that there never was any extra- or contextual reality before the text itself generated it in the form of a mirage," (Jameson, 81).

Ideology is a text that purifies itself, that attempts to deny its own textuality by severing itself from the sociality of its accompanying texts. Ideology is the convincing that there is nothing beyond what is.

Ideology too is a narrative but a narrative that has naturalized itself into appearing as a framework, as a background. Ideology, like all narratives, is artificial, human, and free, but what becomes ideological is what seems necessary. An outside social culture, an inner personal identity, both are two poles of human life that are necessary, but between

them, there is a vast set of dialectical contradictions that constitute who we are. The elements of that that are ideological are what defy their own humanity, that rebel against their artificially in favor of disguising themselves as natural. It is the framework, the background, the assumed plot of a story wherein other narratives can only be sub plots. Any narrative, from the most intimate identity story to the grandest cultural myth can become ideological with the false consciousness of its rigidity (and of course, because they are necessarily intersubjective, they intersect and tie themselves together).

All narratives are subject to ideological reification, the infection of the habitus by "the reifying habit of thinking of a given narrative as an object, or as a unified whole, or as a static structure" (Jameson, 45). An example for identity might be the concept of sexuality, which is held so tightly close to the chest that the very idea of a man loving another man or a woman loving another woman can make a heterosexual person deeply uncomfortable. An example for culture could be the American Dream myth, wherein a particular rags to riches narrative is vaunted as the exemplary path any worthwhile person must go down; anyone who doesn't fit this path must try to modify their personal narratives to fit it.

Allan Bloom is one of many that tries to stretch this particular cultural myth to all of its nation's people, to every citizen and every immigrant that comes to this country: "America tells one story: the unbroken, ineluctable progress of freedom and equality," (55). Bloom is correct in that America only does tell this one story, but it does this by ignoring and silencing other stories, narratives that would counter this one, which reinforces the dominance of the status quo. As Michael Apple says, such a totalizing narrative about immigrants coming to pursue the American Dream forgets that "[s]ome

immigrants came in *chains*, were slaves and faced centuries of repression and government-mandated segregation. And there is a world of difference here," (17). This is one of what Fredric Jameson would call a "master narrative", one that, as the name suggests, necessarily subjugates other narratives beneath its dominant retelling.

These examples show just a glimpse of the complexity of narrative intersections that run counter, alongside, and near each other. What is essentially ideological, for Jameson in particular, is the idea that any reading of this complex of texts is complete. What should be a vast but fluid, constantly rewritten set of narratives becomes, ideologically, a written and completed text. Any of the multiplicity of narratives between identity and culture can congeal into a false consciousness of its completion, of its rigidity, of its naturalness, which sends it to the background as an assumed framework for what else is actively written. This ideological framework "maps the limits of a specific ideological consciousness and marks the conceptual points beyond which that consciousness cannot go, and between which it is condemned to oscillate," (Jameson, 47), which in this analysis is between the poles of culture and identity. While the individual consciousness is, as has been said, always limited by its sociality, ideology is what enforces the limitation of becoming self-conscious of this determinism. Ideology is which has been accepted and the ignorance that it can be rejected.

The absolute frustration with ideology is that it exists right under our noses. While identity is in an intimate closeness with our selves and culture is at an appreciable but socially encompassing distance, ideology exists and functions right in front of us, right around us as if it were an aura within sight but unseeable. Seeing ideology is like trying to see one's own eyes; it is not close enough to simply be reflected on inwardly but not

far enough away to see, it is rather the very function and structure of seeing. It is too close to question but far enough away to seem separate and independent, close enough to seem natural but far enough to not seem artificial.

Despite being so front-and-center, so centrally staged, so universally present, it can hardly be touched. Even brushing up against ideology is like touching an exposed nerve (largely because it is normally immersed in what it is mediating with culture and identity then metaphorically constituting the flesh). Questioning ideology shakes the entire system, forces the pain of potential or actual change throughout culture and identity. When questioning structure, everything atop it must tremble.

To ask how important culture and/or identity is to a person is almost a stupid question: the answer is always some degree of "very." To rupture what holds either but always both up will cause pain as it corrodes that which makes both meaningful. Geertz explains: “it is the attempt of ideologies to render otherwise incomprehensible social situations meaningful, to so construe them as to make it possible to act purposeful within them, that accounts both for the ideologies' highly figurative nature and for the intensity with which, once accepted, they are held," (Geertz, 220). Questioning ideology, by definition, does not question something but questions the structure of somethings, disrupts a narrative of direction and order and stability. It is both a material reality of the body and of society and the immaterial reality of identity and culture. The question for ideology is then not to bring it into absolute clarity by separation (because that is impossible), destruction through scientific investigation (because ideology will always already constrain investigation), or accept it as an unchangeable reality (because all things are historical and thus mutable, and ideologies can do harm). The question for

ideology is that which it resists the most, how can we become conscious enough of it to recognize that it can change and where it must change?

Ideology in Social Reality

We must recognize that despite the difficulty, ideology is not purely invisible. In big and small ways, it can be discovered and examined and even changed. The continual process of life lived also grants one a developing process of self-consciousness, though this is not linear. In some ways, children are much more conscious of how they are socially determined than an adult is. Similarly, even cynical teenagers have a point too when they question the meanings of institutions that have long been accepted by adults. Ideology does not just solidify in an ideal space of the mind but ossifies in the material world as an institution. Despite hiding the movement, both of these aspects dialectically maintain themselves. Foucault elaborates, using the concept of relations of power:

> "[r]elations of power are not in themselves forms of repression. But what happens is that, in society, in most societies, organizations are created to freeze the relations of power, hold those relations in a state of asymmetry, so that a certain number of persons get an advantage, socially, economically, politically, institutionally, etc. And this totally freezes the situation. That's what one calls power in the strict sense of the term: it's a specific type of power relation that has been institutionalized, frozen, immobilized, to the profit of some and to the detriment of others," (Foucault).

Ideology is not so much what is repressive in culture and identity but is a power relation that has frozen into seeming natural and unquestionable.

We must keep in mind that as individuation is a process of the individual becoming conscious of itself as itself, it is also the process of the individual becoming conscious of its social determinism. This consciousness is never complete and never empty, but lies in some developing space in between. If it sounds like I'm repeating myself in a cycle, it's because I am. Clifford Geertz reminds us that "[c]ultural analysis is

intrinsically incomplete," (Geertz, 29) largely because this dialectic can never completely resolve itself. The human is essentially caught in a dialectical contradiction between individual and social that runs its development between a constant tension of these two forces, not merely compromising in the middle but conflicting and contradicting in the center. The very force of individual development cannot be enacted by a settled middle but is pushed onward by the force of a center in contradiction, movement being generated by the friction of contradictions struggling for dominance. So again, even as the individual realizes itself, so must it realize outside of itself.

An Uneven Distribution

Louis Althusser re-articulates this contradiction in the form of interpellation, wherein the very subject of a self realizes itself as being called upon by an external social force. In his words, “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, by the functioning of the category of the subject,” (130). Althusser uses the example of a man on the street being hailed by a police officer. In this moment, as he turns around, he becomes a subject because he has “recognized that the hail was ‘really’ addressed to him, and that ‘it was *really him* who was hailed’ (and not someone else),” (131). The person realizes itself, actually assumes subjecthood (a process which is always already ongoing) through the force of social constitution.

Though this is a universal element of culture, we can see through Althusser’s example how interpellation takes on special significance for people of color and women. The call of a police officer takes on a more dangerous edge for a race presumed guilty and a call from from any man forces the treatment of woman as unwillingly sexual objects in the configuration of the catcall. In interpellation, we can see that the subject is

always already in the process and the product of self realization at the beckoning of culture but that the authority of the social realm in general functions not only for particular individuals enacting particular personal narratives but for people unwillingly fulfilling social roles in a particular social hierarchy. A person as an articulation does not exist in a free cultural framework but within one that is necessarily a hierarchy of oppression, subjugation, and dominance: "[t]here are no subjects except by and for their subjection," (Althusser, 136). Culture is in fact not a neutral web of values but an artificial web of signification wherein a certain dominant order naturalizes a certain hierarchy of significations. Not every narrative is legitimated equally; rather culture is further filtered from the social to the individual and back to the social in the shape of a hierarchy that further narrates and privileges a certain set of significations. The particular signifiers are always arbitrary, as they change with history, but the tension of a hierarchy is always present within culture itself because the persistence of any cultural system needs the generative power of contradiction.

Just as in a story, the supposed protagonist of dominant culture needs a foil to work against to keep the story going. Because culture is always historical, there can never be a pure space of peaceful culture; it is always a moment constituted by past and future struggle, with residual cultures residing in the background and emergent ones rising in the foreground. Those that benefit from the state of the current moment are always heavily invested in the reproduction of the material grounds for said moment. Any call to end history and remain can never work and will always fail, but any call to value one signification over another has the power to be lasting, whether that is a frightful form of dominance or an emergent progressive movement.

Culture is always in contention with itself as a composition of contradictions. In order to persist, these contradictions cannot persist peacefully but must confront themselves combatively, thus creating a hierarchy of legitimated winners and invalidated losers. Though everyone is equally realized in culture, not all said cultures are made equally, and it is this constant tension, disguised illusorily as natural peace, which constitutes any moment of culture. Cultural contradiction is the basis for class struggle, which is why Marxists can accurately say it is eternal and essential to history; there is always a hierarchy. As said before in other guises, the eternal facet of human history is class struggle, dialectical contradiction. Though class is the animating property for the dialectical history of struggle between those who profit and those who labor, this struggle must always occur within a cultural context that both creates it, justifies it, and is in turn dialectically created by it: "[t]he class struggle is always already a cultural struggle," (Readings, 94).

Culture as Hierarchy

We can then understand that at any moment when someone is interpellated as an individual within culture they are not only positioned in a structure but implicated in a hierarchy. While this all corresponds to a vast minutia of historical specifications, we can generally break this interpellation into categories: those of high culture and those of sub. Keeping in mind the essential movement of cultural identification, even as it is ideologically disguised as stable, one's place in culture is always defined by one finding one's place in culture. The ideological unity of cultural and identity narratives are made coherent only by an ideological configuration of stability. Though we may think our culture and our identities are neutral locations or assemblages of materials, they are

embedded in a social historical hierarchy that ideologically reconfigures how our assemblage of narratives will be cohered.

High culture is what people refer to when they talk about someone becoming cultured, going out and getting some culture, and going to university to become initiated in culture. Implicit in this function of culture is an ascending motion, a movement and struggle toward transcending what one once was to become a better version. Going to the opera, watching the best films, reading the greatest literature, and associating with the best people are all signifiers of high culture, and some of them may be necessary but none of them are sufficient. High culture is defined by its constant movement upward, a motion of reaching but never grasping. There is not a king of culture astride the throne as the pinnacle of highest sensibilities. Perhaps at a party, one person may be seen as the most stylish, as the life of the party, but the entire company, them included, knows that any person perched high is one faux pas away from tumbling down. There is no resting in high culture because one must always be in ascension, which essentially means that one must always be reaching. One must constantly be accruing more signifiers because high culture relies on social recognition as well as the further strengthening of the buttresses of their social positions, i.e. wealth accrual.

These signifiers have no specific permanent, natural content but change with history. In ages past, people of all kinds would go to see plays for instance, (of course, even those were split into better and worse ones), but nowadays, that is seen as a largely high culture thing to do. Further, high culture can easily appropriate any signifier that used to exist in the general social world and remove it to a higher realm. The writings of Shakespeare used to be for the common people until his work was appropriated and

locked away in a world of high culture. Poor William has probably been spinning in his grave for years knowing that his work is most commonly seen as something for an elite class, most often as something to do in college behind a huge paywall.

With these examples, we can begin to see that throughout history there aren't consistent examples of things that are naturally high culture. The idea of a natural, objective, even real (in the sense that it is not a social construction) culture is simply a fabrication used to further reinforce the power of such a hierarchy. The force of higher culture is thus an ideology of exclusion. In a power structure like white supremacy for instance: "[w]hiteness has more value in relation to other races as long as it maintains its exclusive privileges. The more other races are granted the rights and privileges of whiteness, the less value it maintains," (Zamudio, 33). The value of a race is of course not based on the color of its skin but on the arbitrary choice of skin as signifier and the material reinforcement of oppression and subjugation of one signifier as being better than the other, as excluding and thus becoming valuable in opposition to an Other. Higher culture deals in a line of thinking Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls "abyssal thinking":

> "The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of “this side of the line” and the realm of “the other side of the line”. The division is such that “the other side of the line” vanishes as reality becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. Nonexistent means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being. Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other. What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the copresence of the two sides of the line. To the extent that it prevails, this side of the line only prevails by exhausting the field of relevant reality. Beyond it, there is only nonexistence, invisibility, non dialectical absence […] These forms of radical negation together result in a radical absence, the absence of humanity, modern subhumanity. The exclusion is thus both radical and nonexistent, as subhumans are not conceivably candidates for social inclusion. Modern humanity is not conceivable without modern sub humanity. The negation of one part of humanity is sacrificial, in that it is the condition of the affirmation of that other

part of humanity which considers itself as universal," (45).

Those that are excluded are then made to be radically absent from any discourse, thus unavailable to constitute themselves as social beings. A culture of exclusion defines itself by what is negated; similarly, humanity then defines itself based on what is defines as subhuman. This oppression is not done through a mode of explicit repression but is maintained thorough systems of legitimation that exclude such sub-humans from even being socially considered.

To ascend, one must learn to exclude, make others descend, or at least take on the signifiers of having enacted such movements. Importantly, this ascension is to be metaphorically understood as a motion more than a structure. Though terms such as these and others like hierarchy and base and superstructure always imply linear vertical structures, we have to remember the influences of structuralists and post-structuralists, primarily Michel Foucault, who showed that a more functional metaphor is one of "center and periphery." Bill Readings goes on to describe this as a model that isn't in the mode of "speaking of power in terms of the vertical ascendancy of the rulers over the dominated (the classical model of class domination)," instead, "we speak of multiple marginalized positions in relation to a hegemonic center." This kind of diagram allows us to map the "relations of power among transverse groups (groups that include members of all social classes, such as women or homosexuals)," (Readings, 105). Though Marx still has a point in that social groups can largely be split into the owners of production and the laborers, of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, modern divisions of oppression necessitate practice that involves the acknowledgement of intersectional lines of power relations in order to create such class consciousness that would allow for the union of oppressed groups. High

culture in fact maintains its dominance through such ignorance by excluding different people in different ways, dividing them away and against each other, always pushing them away from the "hegemonic center."

Sub Culture

Any concept involving the democratization of high culture is then a contradiction in terms because the very act of disseminating and generalizing high culture destroys it. In most modern day industries, and I include the university in this, walls are being continually broken down for the inclusion of other races and genders in predominantly white male fields. The main reason this produces such destructive tension is not just that a privileged and elite class has to learn to share, but that the very entrance of other cultures into high cultures ruptures what it used to mean. Once high culture becomes inclusive, its exclusive nature is corroded, and the entire concept collapses in on itself. It is naive to think that high culture can simply be taught or forced to become more inclusive. Culture cannot merely be reformed; it must be destroyed and remade. The entrance of sub cultures into high cultures cannot be anything but an explosive revolution.

The temptation here is to compare high culture to low culture, and, though there is some value in this critique, it is too small a picture. The dominant tension is not between high and low culture but between high culture and sub culture. Low culture is largely just a negative reflection of high culture, holding on to the remnants of what high culture hasn't taken and what they are allowed to get without high culture's systematic advantages. Dialectically, low culture does not contradict high culture but compliments it. High culture needs low culture to exclude in order to function. A contradiction is feigned,

but in truth, as discussed, any signifier can pass up and down between the levels through the passage of history.

Sub culture is culture that is not simply excluded or pressed down by high culture but is actually marginalized and erased. Sub cultures do not participate in the race to the top, because they are not considered to be part of any spectrum of culture; they are attached but not within. As with high culture and culture in general, there is no strict definition and boundaries to draw, but with the advent of the 60s counter culture, we have been given a clear language to at least draw some lines. In America, these lines are largely of race and gender, black and female. In the 60s, largely springing from the universities, students emerged that demanded their sub cultures be recognized, the two largest claims coming from black people and women (groups that also intersected). Suddenly, the universities, which had previously been the bearers and legitimators of high culture, the badge givers of entrance into high culture, had to recognize a fundamentally different type of culture.

If high culture is constituted by exclusion, dialectically, sub culture is constituted by the opposite function, inclusion. As with high culture, if we were to ask a representative of a sub culture what defined their culture, we would probably get a host of different answers, none of them being necessary or sufficient to strictly define sub culture. We are working with recognition of familial likenesses, not of any specific content. High culture is defined by an absolute exclusion, a core void that pushes everything out so that people must continually reach for signifiers to grasp a center that cannot be touched. The essential difference is that sub culture actually unites people, founding itself on inclusion rather than exclusion.

If we were to eliminate every signifier that wasn't universal to each person in a sub culture, we would be left with one thing (one thing more than high culture) – oppression. At its limit, the sub cultures of such groups as black people and women are united by the socially constructed aspects that signify their inclusions in groups that are systematically oppressed. For black people it is the color of their skin and for women it is their gender. There are a multitude of other signifiers that contribute to the social recognition of such people as belonging to oppressed groups (e.g. music choice, clothing, dialect, etc.) but they always symbolically point to their group signification, a situating of oppression. Members of a sub culture are essentially united by their oppression, a fundamentally social, inclusive recognition. These sub cultures are based not on excluding on the basis of achievement but including on the basis of group recognition of oppression.

I must again make a note here that this is a methodological diagram for culture, not a blue print that will apply to every specific instance. Dialectically, we have to remember that every instance contains both aspects of a contradiction. There are certainly members of high culture that will include people in their circle, but generally this is an exception to a rule, and those chosen to be pulled into inclusion are usually still originating from certain systematic castes. Similarly, there are cases of sub cultures excluding people, e.g. a black person not recognizing someone from a mixed racial background. Again, there is still a fundamental basis of inclusion because suffering and oppression still unites them despite recognition.

One of the great advantages of the cultural hierarchy for the dominant is that high culture gets the privilege of modeling what it even means to be a culture. The more a sub

culture tries to define itself as a true culture in the terms of what high culture defines, the more they become exclusive and corrode themselves from within. Further, high culture comes to an ascendent singular point that can, in moments of history, take on the semblance of a specific, objective content while sub cultures are fractured by the very oppression that unites them into fragmented groups.

Once again, we can look to the 60s wherein women and black people both took on the mantles of sub cultures to define themselves against high culture but did not necessarily unite together. Though they were both oppressed by the system at large, the specifics of their most pointed oppressions focused their in- group recognition of things that divided them. This is simple to understand when recognizing that black people would understandably be focused on what oppresses them as black people and women would be focused on what oppresses them as women. This reveals the important idea that, even now, those people that intersect between those sub cultural lines are often erased or marginalized within their own sub culture. While sub cultures are divided, sometimes even explicitly against each other, we can get cases of black men employing the patriarchy and white women employing racism to suppress black women. Again, the grand model of culture is based on a high culture of exclusion so it's tempting to subsume that in order to formulate a specific identity. Examining the specifics of oppression often result in a fractal like pattern wherein exclusive patterns are repeated as one zooms in on social actions. We have to remember that individual identities are comprised of many contradictory elements, as are the social recognitions of such individual identities.

The key here is that the main contradiction in this hierarchy is not between high culture and low but between high culture and sub culture. Low culture is merely a

negative reflection of high culture, while sub culture, though it may indeed be maligned as low, is in fact its own sufficient system. Low culture and sub culture are deeply intermixed, an ambiguity that favors high culture's dismissal of sub culture as simply being low. Low-riding pants for instance, were a signifier of black male identity but have become in the larger social discourse a signifier of stupidity and lower class. Deriding this style can be done without any explicit, intentional racism and can be defended as such. This is further aided by the appropriation of this style by other groups, in this case white men, which aids people in convincing themselves their disdain is across an arbitrary line of fashion rather than a line of sub cultural racism.

Especially as previously sub cultural signifiers, positioned as low, such as rap music, gain mainstream attention, always aided by the general perception that something culturally significant is actually merely individually "edgy", sub cultural signifiers can be appropriated and subsumed into the high cultural milieu. Jameson reflects on this in his study of literature, "popular narrative from time immemorial—romance, adventure story, melodrama, and the like—is ceaselessly drawn on to restore vitality to an enfeebled and asphyxiating 'high culture,'" (86). Low and sub cultures are derided and dismissed until high culture has made itself so bland as to need them. High culture, by always severing itself from what it deems as other, tends to gradually smother itself within its own self-created vacuum. From here, we can understand the almost confounding situations wherein a white rapper can be valorized as being an intelligent social critic while a multitude of black rappers with deeper insights are silenced and erased in popular discourse. Those sub cultures are told they are merely low with the possibility of maybe doing what they do in a high way but in reality, they are deeply oppressed and

marginalized, unable to ascend.

If there is a strong dividing line between high culture and sub, and even this blurs with case-by-case analysis, it is between people who can ascend and those that cannot. Though, as Marx said, the vast majority of people are oppressed in class based societies, the ideologically constructed picture of this is of everyone as able to ascend and everyone not ascended as having not done so by choice. In reality, even considering those that desperately want to attain high culture, most people cannot climb because of social factors outside of their control such as their gender, their race, and their class position. These people are instilled with the individualist idea that if they all worked hard enough and did the right things, they could ascend. However, these supposedly pure individuals are ensnared in a social reality they cannot escape, an artificial hierarchy disguised as a natural one wherein everyone is situated as being "not enough," so they can be induced into the never ending race to get to the top.

Here, we can see that culture is at it its essence a reflection of its economic core because the same rules apply there. People are blamed for their economic woes as if their wealth was purely a reflection of their effort, as if they existed as individuals completely separate from society and structural determinations. Just as in culture, the ideology of ascension situates people as individuals competing for the pinnacle, rather than groups tied together by mutual recognition of oppression. This is why such sub cultures that do begin to recognize this systematic power must be further suppressed and quelled. It is not enough for these sub cultures to be marginalized; ideally, their erasure from the discourse would finally result in material erasure. Dominant high culture would rather absorb everything about this sub culture that they deem of worth and leave the carcass to the

side. High culture exists because of its exclusion of low culture; for high culture to recognize self sufficient, differently organized sub cultures would be to destroy it. High culture is predicated on the idea that culture is a universal construct, a general spectrum in which people can rise and fall. Everything must be subsumed into its scope or it implodes.

Before we leave from this analysis, we must acknowledge that the hierarchy alone is a little too individualistic and voluntaristic. Though we have focused on lines of oppression that are definitely socially constructed such as race, gender, and class, it's still tempting to act as if the hosts of signifiers that collect to form recognition are still largely a matter of choice. We would be operating from a framework wherein one may start off female but then choose signifiers that push one up or down the cultural spectrum. It is this kind of framework that lends itself to the liberal analysis wherein sub cultures are told to merely be more like the high culture (implicitly assuming the high culture is not also socially constructed, that its value is natural rather than contingent). If we put aside the above discussion's radical terminology of negations and implosions, we could work from it to recommend that "oppressed" people simply take up signifiers of higher culture and "teach" those individual racist/sexist people that these people too can be a part of high culture. This puts the burden of education on the sub culture, as if they need to show that they can be good as well in order to convince individuals (never systems, never groups) that they can be "good."

This is why we must remember the aforementioned structure of culture and identity that constructs who a person is and what material they have around them to determine who they can be. When comparing the dominant high culture to the

underrepresented sub culture, it is easy to ideologically see the former as normal and human and the latter as abnormal and other. Both, however, are equally subject to the human absorption of culture and identity from the social apparatus. The hierarchy is imminent to that of culture itself. It is an ideological framework applied within culture that has been selectively forgotten until it seems like a natural, a priori knowledge. Both are in fact human artifices and must be treated as such.

Hierarchy as Immanent Structure

There is no linear temporal timeline one can draw that shows culture emerging before the application of hierarchy. They always already exist together. As long as there has been domination, there has been subjugation because the subject has always needed an other to define itself against. The individual must be defined against a background, upon a social stage that creates the space for its explication. Beyond these fundamental articulations, the individual needs a narrative by which to point itself, a narrative implicit in its formation: "[i]t is a loss of orientation that most directly gives rise to ideological activity, an inability, for lack of usable models, to comprehend the universe of civic rights and responsibilities in which one finds oneself located," (Geertz, 219). This loss of orientation is a condition of being human, a condition of "desperation" that always already prefigures a person as searching for cultural and personal order. Amidst the chaos of intersecting and conflicting webs of signification, ideology is sought out for stability and peace.

Any subject is interpellated both in culture and identity at large as well as being interpellated within the hierarchy immanent to those poles. Just as identity and culture are being narratively constructed alongside and against each other, so is a historical

ideological framework always hierarchized and legitimating/delegitimizing certain aspects of those constructions. This hierarchy creates a seemingly natural set of roles for people to play, wherein everyone has a place to be and a narrative to enact: "operating from these narratives amounts to remembering one's place and establishing one's expectations," (Russon, 66). Society creates a certain niche, a controlled space in which one can realize oneself. Especially given the dominance of this ideology both in the weaving of cultural and personal identities, there is a certain amount of comfort given to any role because it does not depend on any individual effort but merely in a certain mode of existence: "[i]dentification is more secure, less liable to be threatened, if it does not depend on accomplishment," (Margalit, 82). This identification is secured by the establishment of personal narratives that are predisposed to fit in with cultural ones, by the creation of roles that establish a set of expectations and a place for one to sustain this realization.

The hierarchy does not survive merely by the strong-arm power of repression but by a certain tradeoff wherein almost anyone receives some place in the collective (of course, the term "trade off" implies one exists before sociality and makes a trade, similar to the social contract arguments, but we always already exist within this social tie). We exist as we are within society, so there is no human nature before entrance, emerging out as either oppressed or not. As John Russon reminds us, "[w]e are never isolated individuals who only subsequently enter into contact with others. On the contrary, we are from the start inescapably engaged with the experience of other people," (Russon, 56), and that experience is always unequally, unevenly, and unfairly distributed.

So, though we may recognize that social power actively creates roles for people to

enact and find meaning in, oppression still enacts mental and material damage on the oppressed with "pressures to perform one's identity so as to avoid being the subject of stereotyping or to fit prevailing norms [which] imposes psychic costs on those who have to compromise or ignore significant parts of themselves, or who are denied opportunities because they are not willing to compromise," (Zamudio, 38). The oppressive roles created are especially limiting, and this has a detrimental effect on the development of oppressed people, further limiting their ability to rebel against such ideologies. Still, even without a pure identity that one has before entering into oppression, one can still learn to become conscious of one's own oppression.

Power As A Creative, Active Force

That said, we still can't merely see power as a repressive force. Rather, as Foucault repeatedly reminds us, power does not work purely as a repressive mechanism but as an active one: "[w]e must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms; it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces, it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (Foucault, 194). Power creates roles for people, in a sense, creates certain kinds of people. Power creates narratives for people as it creates people to interlock with those narratives. The people however, as social beings, are both their own and the roles they exist in. Power does not constrain some pure individual but actually constitutes people, the idea of pure individuality itself only being an illusory ideological framework.

With this as a basis of power, oppression is transmitted through people by way of

a conduit, with individuals being the "vehicles of power, not its points of application," (Foucault, 98). Rather than individual beings the sites or points of active oppression, they are the socially defined nodes that circulate within a certain "net" of power. We are always already ensconced in a certain oppressive discourse, a matrix of cultural-identity-ideology-hierarchal structure, a towering edifice of man made social reality that we both exist in and are constituted by, of which we do not as much become conscious as become self conscious.

Narrative is still a useful term here because people can then be seen as constituting themselves in their articulations and being constituted by the availability of the social language from which they can speak, that discourse being constituted by that collectively human generated historical power matrix. Truth itself is defined by such a discourse:

> "[t]here are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize, and constitute the social body and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated or implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth," (Foucault, 93).

Discourse is inextricably linked up with power, both of them defining how a person is to act through the roles society makes available to them, to the kinds of responses that are legitimated and acknowledged. As Marx originally said, as historical beings, we are what we are determined to be and what we determine ourselves to be, with the important clarification that the human never enters history but exists by way of it.

We have also mass-produced and repackaged the idea that one should be happy with one's place, so resistance is often seen as ungratefulness or ignorance about what is

natural. Resistance can also be a dangerous position to act in because, thanks to culture's essentially ascending/descending movement, any form of truly outlying behavior can get one booted from the game entirely. In this sense, it is safer and more comfortable (at least appearance wise) to remain in one's station than thirst for too much more. Even as culture is always moving, people are told to stay in their place. This becomes fundamentally difficult to resist because, as said, humans are social and cultural creatures. To try to be an individual against one's social determination by bucking cultural narratives can be incredibly difficult and impossible to do in a total sense. Even as a black man in New York, for example, tries to cut his own narrative through racist American culture for himself as a respectful, educated person, the material culture around him in the forms of the police can easily disrupt that by treating him as a criminal. Further, trying to live while absolutely denying one's sociality in the form of oppression is to take on a significant mental pain that may not even recognized or respected by social reality. To try to deny one's social determination is to try to survive on one side of a dialectical contradiction.

Cultural Productions

Even as cultures define themselves by limitations and negations, they also begin to recognize themselves by their productions. Up until now, culture has been a vaguely metaphysical, abstract notion that we somehow embody and by which we delimit ourselves. Until this analysis too is brought into a social understanding, it still seems individualistic. To understand this, we have to understand recognition. This is the process whereby someone from a particular cultural group recognizes and includes someone else in that group. This is done by a process of semiotic recognition wherein certain signs are

interpreted as signifiers of group identity.

For some, this is easy, such as people of color recognizing each other based on skin color and women recognizing themselves from feminine signifiers (and there is argument that oppressed groups are oppressed partially because these signifiers are easy to recognize one by, difficult to extricate oneself from, and provide a distinct stage on which to design an oppressive matrix). For others, it can be more difficult as the range of specification draws as close to a neighborhood and as wide as a country (and of course, these specifications often do intersect). For this multiplicity of interlocking and interplaying groups to recognize each other, we cannot merely assume a cultural background but must recognize each other too on a cultural present and future, a cultural production.

Cultures are not just defined by who they are but what they have done, largely in the form of cultural products that take shape by way of books, music, film, and more. Especially in modern America, one's cultural production is largely recognized by way of one's contribution to American popular culture production. Culture is then not just seen as external but is seen as something one can own: "...culture is used to designate not merely something to which one belongs but something that one possesses," (Said, 8-9).

For humanities education in particular, for that is what we are actually talking about after all, it takes as a framework culture as something someone must be initiated into by way of these cultural products. Humanities education has always been implicated and has often actively positioned itself as the top of the cultural hierarchy, taking in students to initiate them into their cultural ascension. Even today, there often exists a cultural tension when first time college students return home and they are seen as being

more cultured, both to their respect and their denigration. Humanities education, by way of its monopoly on cultural texts, has historically been seen as the bearer and legitimator of culture.

With this analysis of culture, we can now return to the starkly contrasting historical moments of the Sputnik rise and the 60s fall of the cultural institution of the humanities.

The Disintegration of the Cultural Framework

The Institution of Sub Cultures In Higher Education

The Sputnik moment can now be seen retrospectively as the last great call for culture, the last foundation on which a grand supporting of our cultural heritage in the form of the university could be supported. The 60s can now be seen as the rise of a multiplicity of sub cultures to take the reins of this support and demand recognition as equally valid cultures within the university, proclaiming that if the university were to initiate people into culture, it must initiate them into all of its varieties.

I fervently wish I had more time and space to explore this topic but I can only draw on so much to build a context for the present moment that will be analyzed in some depth. With the radicalism of the 60s came the call for representation, for minorities of all kinds to be represented in all kinds of narratives. Rightfully, certain groups, subordinated and marginalized by the dominant societal narrative, felt that the figurative erasure throughout society worked hand in hand with the material struggle that oppressed them, symbolic violence tying directly to material violence. In higher education, this meant the fight to have different voices from different sources included in the curriculum as well as entire course subjects dedicated to the exclusive study of these oppressed voices, such as Women's Studies and African American Studies.

Again, I would love more than anything to embark on a long and worthwhile study of the rise of these subjects, but time is not on my side. Rather, we must stick to others' comments on the rise of these subjects and put not their rise but their plateau and possible fall in the context of this evolving modern situation. Thanks largely to the efforts of activists and a demanding public, subjects like Women's Studies, African American

studies, and LGBT studies have gone from subjects ignored by the dominant culture to be institutionalized subjects in higher education. They broke up the hegemonic image of higher culture and through that, the hegemony of the university.

As Raymond Williams reminds us: "[a]bove all we have to give an account which allows for [hegemony's] elements of real and constant change. We have to emphasize that hegemony is not singular; indeed that its own internal structures are highly complex, and have continually to be renewed, recreated and defended; and by the same token, that they can be continually challenged and in certain respects modified," (Williams, 8). This modification transformed an erased subject to being at least a marginal one, though neoliberalism (among other ideologies, including sexism and racism) has stymied the progress of such subjects from exceeding their statuses as electives.

This has still been a huge step forward for the visibility and the critical work on such thought.

> "Indeed, the admission of women and people of color into predominantly white universities and colleges forced new modes of interpretation and new institutional visions within the American academy. At the same time, the student movements and student demands had to negotiate with and appeal to prevailing institutional structures. The student movements of the sixties and seventies constituted and inspired interpretative communities that would propose institutional models that were both disruptive and recuperative of existing institutions," (Ferguson).

Even though these subjects have been absorbed into the dominant cultural framework, we have to remember that even without their sharpest subversive edge, they still do vast amounts of good.

Though there may be concerns raised about the institutionalization of such studies laying the ground for further marginalization, we must remember the multitude of students that achieved critical consciousness because of classes such as these. Though we

may choose to reimagine how higher education is structured entirely, we must remember the struggle that was waged for these subjects to have even the precarious position they do now. By providing students with an opportunity to critically reflect on the structures around certain identities, these subjects have done an overwhelming amount of good. Going forward, we must remember the great strides they have given us and the lessons they have taught. No matter what sweeping critiques we may have for higher education in general, we cannot lose sight of the fact that there has been a lot of good done and, a lot of that good remains. The best kinds of critique not only dismantle what is bad but take apart to reveal and amplify what good remains inside. As bell hooks reminds us about feminism in particular: "[t]he institutionalization of women's studies helped spread the word about feminism. It offered a legitimate site for conversion by providing a sustained body of open minds. Students who attended women's studies classes were there to learn. They wanted to know more about feminist thinking. And it was in those classes that many of us awakened politically," (21).

By the nature of humanities education and its influence on culture, its changes, even without radicalism, float through and are accepted without much credit. Natalia Cecire, for instance, is one of many writers that demand the acknowledgement of the reclamation of oppressed literature in the public consciousness, asking us to

> "thank the scholars, artists, and activists who have recovered that work—often obscured by a racist publishing culture and by an academy that didn't think it was important at the time. There's a reason that students protested and sat in to fight for the establishment of ethnic studies and women's studies departments in the 1960s and 70s. It wasn't a fashion statement: serious formal engagement with the cultural contributions of women and ethnic minorities was urgently needed," (Cecire).

As Cecire goes on to say, "[w]e may not always notice the ways that academic concepts

are circulated and reinterpreted in popular culture, but that's because we live and breathe it every day. Just like scientific research, humanities research constantly crosses in and out of the academy, and it’s so much a part of everyday life that most of the time we don’t even bother to think of it as 'humanities.'" With culture and identity being the very substance of everyday activities and consciousness, the humanities, as the educational area that most directly treats culture and identity as academic objects, has its reputation suffer from its very success for imprinting its knowledge on society at large.

Before we move on, we must then recognize that this movement is without a doubt a great success on the part of sub cultures achieving greater renown. As Michael Apple warns: "[a]ll too often we forget that in our attempts to alter and 'reform' schooling there are elements that should not be changed but need to be kept and defended." He requires "a much clearer and more historically informed appraisal of what elements of the practices and policies of these institutions are already progressive and should be maintained. Not to do so would be to assume that, say, radical teachers, people of color, women, working class groups, and physically challenged groups (these categories obviously are not mutually exclusive) have been puppets whose strings are pulled by the most conservative forces in this society and have not won any lasting victories in education," (xvi).

Ever retaining a dialectical perspective, we must remember that in constant and universal contradiction, that which is dominant also exists in opposition to something subordinate. In Raymond Williams' terms, there are always alternative and oppositional strands to the dominant narrative, some of them being emergent and some of them being residual. We must recognize and support efforts that have already been made to make

education progressive. In our effort to revitalize education, we must continue support for that which is emergent so that there is space for it to flourish in our analysis.

Our culture as a whole has benefited greatly from that, but in this movement, we see the subtle background disintegration of such an idea as "our culture as a whole." Certainly, sub cultures have always existed, but their marginalization and silence has been a nearly uninterrupted one in history. For the university, the radical movements of the 60s would be more radical than many imagined. As discussed in our culture section, the institutionalization of sub culture into high culture cannot be seen as a mere integration of low culture into high but a necessarily radical restructuring of culture itself. The inclusion of voices cannot simply be a curricular addition but must in fact be a radical change as the resolving of culture's defining contradiction would irreparably change it.

Of course, with the university and capitalism at large benefiting from the ideologically hierarchal shape of culture, there has been resistance to this potentially explosive change. Conservatives across the board have continually denounced these sub cultures with strategies alluded to before, by decreeing them illegitimate, by accusing them of being worse, by construing them as low culture, and more. Though these attacks are certainly dangerous and have certainly had major success in wearing down the popular idea that these curricular inclusions are essential or even important, the more insidiously dangerous process has been the very institutionalization of these subjects.

A Radical Change

Though sub groups oppose high culture, as it gets institutionalized, which in a capitalist framework implicitly means commodified, that contradiction gradually strays

into the university's dominant narrative of high culture. What this means is that even cultures based on inclusion can gradually be institutionalized into being shaped by exclusion. This takes the form of Women's Studies courses that fill themselves up with jargon that exclude women of color and those that are not formally educated to be comfortable with such language, it means valorizing reformist strategies that privilege academic positions, it means emphasizing theory over practice so that academia can remain the stronghold of this sub culture, effectively turning a place for freedom into a place of restriction. Again and again, we see how what was inclusionary can become exclusionary. What was once radical can become a commodity that only those with a certain privilege can afford. Considering some of the most radical progressive ideas seek to save those without privilege, their full audience is then barred from being reached. Instead, they get those that often tokenize these subjects or treat them as tangential, further contributing to the general narrative that these subjects are not important. With these modifications and compromises, even the most radical movements of the 60s were either rejected and defeated or grudgingly accepted and gradually absorbed into the university model.

What's particularly special about the rise of this genre of subject is its representation for marginalized cultures and its relatively recent rise. Ideally, we would like people to see that all subjects and the particular methods of studying them are contingent and historical; certain amounts of time sediment these ideas too compactly for questioning. There was a point in history where the very thought of professionally teaching literature was a new one: "the idea that literature could or should be taught- rather than simply enjoyed or absorbed as part of the normal upbringing of gentlefolk-

was a novel one, and no precedents existed for organizing such an enterprise," (Graff, 1). For every aspect of culture we take for granted as natural and solid, there has been a historical precedent created by the work of human beings before us. More importantly, of the vast number of historical decisions that have been made, the few that survive tend to, though not always, represent the interests of the dominant class: "if we fail to see a superstructural element we fail to recognize reality at all. These laws, constitutions, theories, ideologies, which are claimed as natural, or as having universal validity or significance, simply have to be seen as expressing and ratifying the domination of a particular class," (Williams, 7). The feelings of naturalness and common sense are especially significant signs of history accepted rather than examined.

The Institutionalization of Radicalism

Of course, the rise of cultural studies is one of the rare examples of a historical change not institutionalized through gradual tides but through a titanic force of activism. To make them seem natural, to retrofit them and then justify their institutionalization, some fantastic tricks would have to be pulled. As Gerald Graff notes, "'[p]rofessionalization' and 'academicization' are not neutral principles of organization, but agents that transform the cultural and literary-critical 'ims' fed into them, often to the point of subverting their original purpose, or so deflecting them that they become unrecognizable to outsiders. What goes in is not necessarily what comes out, and this is one reason why the things the institution seems self-evidently to stand for to insiders may scarcely register on outsiders," (5). Though the inclusion of these subjects has by far had a net benefit, their inclusion in a different order has certainly dulled their subversive edges.

As Graff examines in detail, the very structure of higher education set the game against these subjects. True subversion and revolution cannot be commodified but must cause a rippling change that reorganizes the entire system. Higher education, with what Graff calls its "field coverage model," eases absorption under the guise of fluidity and adaptability: "[i]n the coverage model, [...] innovation even of a threatening kind could be welcomed by simply adding another unit to the aggregate of fields to be covered," (7). Within a neoliberal context, this eases commodification and neutralization. In Williams' analysis, this kind of assimilation can transform an oppositional culture into a merely alternative one. Students have the option of taking these electives if they want to, but they don't have to, and the outside culture certainly doesn't recommend it. Beyond being merely alternative, they are also seen as tangential, notes barely sticking to the main document of one's education.

"The field-coverage principle made the modern educational machine friction free, for by making individuals functionally independent in the carrying out of their tasks it prevented conflicts from erupting which would otherwise have had to be confronted, debated, and worked through," (Graff, 7). This is a classic example of Marx's division of labor, wherein capitalism divides different forms of labor from and against one another. "The tacit assumption has been that students should be exposed only to the results of professional controversies, not to the controversies themselves, which would presumably confuse or demoralize them," (Graff, 8). This model assumes as central and unquestioned what Paulo Freire called the "banking" model of education, wherein students are passive sponges that absorb information without question. Implicitly, the banking model in this context trains students to see knowledge as an objective product

worked out for them by experts behind closed doors. They do not take part in the defining and legitimizing of these knowledges, rather, they are merely recipients of the products of these arguments. Of course, when the authorities behind these doors are authorities over the dominant class and culture, they overwhelmingly tend to be white, rich, and male. With these kinds of kings in charge, it is no wonder that it took this long for such cultural studies to be accepted at all, and when they were finally forced to begrudgingly accept them, they were sidelined as subjects marginal to "real" knowledge.

Within this context, the institutionalizations of such subjects divided them from their counterparts in real world practice. "While academic legitimation was crucial to the advancement of feminist thought, it created a new set of difficulties. Suddenly the feminist thinking that had emerged directly from theory and practice received less attention than theory that was metalinguistic, creating exclusive jargon; it was written solely for an academic audience. It was as if a large body of feminist thinkers banded together to form an elite group writing theory that could be understood only by an 'in' crowd," (hooks, 22). Due in part to a combination of the marginalizing of these cultural subjects within the academy and the inherent institutionalizing process of higher education itself, these subjects became microcosms of sub cultures unto themselves. With all sides embattled, it is understandable how they too became partially subject to the structure of exclusivity. At its worst, this process almost completely neutralizes the radical nature of these subjects. "Work was and is produced in the academy that is oftentimes visionary, but these insights rarely reach many people. As a consequence the academization of feminist thought in this manner undermines feminist movement via depoliticization. Deradicalized, it is like every other academic discipline with the only

difference being the focus on gender," (hooks, 22), resulting in the all too often situation wherein "[f]eminist thinking and theory were no longer tied to feminist movement," (hooks, 22). Blame is not to be leveled primarily at the subject heads themselves but at the consumption process of higher education as well as the nearly all-powerful base of market ideology.

Here, we see a microscopic study of what we will expand in later analysis, namely the assimilation, neutralization, and commodification of all thought within capitalist ideology. Even with these harsh modifications, under neoliberal's cutthroat market ideology, these cultural studies have not thrived. Many face steep budget cuts and deletion entirely. From my point of view, this is a sign of their worthwhile nature. Even the vast cultural power of the current dominant force can swallow subjects such as these, subjects that inherently subvert the values of capitalism. Though we certainly can't smile at their removal, we can be proud that they constituted threats. Eventually, it became more worthwhile for them to be cut entirely than to refit them and reduce them. This is a huge sign that there are inherently subversive elements to these subjects, and we will take this into account later in the recommendation part of this analysis.

We must now understand that the mere introduction of new content, even subversive and revolutionary content, will not be enough to reform education. To truly revolutionize education, we would have to change its fundamental ideological structure, not just reform its cultural and personal contents. Of course, these relations being dialectical and highly mediated, new contents do subtly change structures but even at the vast level of the 60s, we were still looking at what was essentially a reform rather than a revolution.

Disintegrating Culture

This all being said, the radicalism of the 60s did strike a blow that reverberated at the heart of the university, that not only changed humanities education but ruptured the foundation of education theory itself. Even reforms can cut deep. In the background of explicit demands for the inclusion of sub cultures lay, as has been alluded to, the fundamental destruction of culture itself. We can see this in the fear of an enemy of such reforms by way of Allan Bloom: "[y]ou don't replace something with nothing. Of course, that was exactly what the educational reform of the sixties was doing," (320). The "something" replaced was the universality of culture and the "nothing" that replaced it was the plurality of culture. What is seen as destruction by Bloom was rather a radical reconceptualization. The institutionalization of a sub culture into the dominant high culture could not result in anything but some substantive change to the idea of culture itself. Even as the university consciously absorbed and institutionalized it, unconsciously, the foundation on which the university stood swayed.

This can be seen most clearly in the rise of cultural studies, an umbrella term that encompasses both traditional humanities disciplines and new ones introduced in the 60s and beyond. We can see in its terminology that culture has now been objectified from its ideological status as a framework to an object to be studied: "the rise of Cultural Studies becomes possible only when culture is dereferentialized and ceases to be the principle of study in the University," (Readings, 17). Though the humanities has always meant studying culture in one way or another, culture had been assumed as a framework to be entered into. The students were generally not critical of culture, not because they had been suppressed or brainwashed, but because culture had reified into an ideological

framework to be assumed and not critiqued. It was the container of the content to be analyzed, not the content itself. Further, it was the framework, the stage upon which all content was analyzed and all content was justified. The major difference to understand after the Sputnik boom and the post 60s bust in educational funding is that culture could no longer be used as a justification for the university: "Cultural Studies must be understood to arise when culture ceases to be the animating principle of the University and [...] becomes instead an object of study among others, a discipline rather than a metadisciplinary idea," (Readings, 92).

The 60s brought new perspectives, but this also brought fragmentation. No longer could the university assume culture to be a unitary, singular, cohesive, and coherent narrative by which to justify the continuation of its existence. If the university told the nation at large that it needed to be sustained so that people could be initiated into high culture, the nation could now very well reply, "Which?" As Bill Readings said when he studied this disintegration in detail:

> "The liberal individual is no longer capable of metonymically embodying the institution. None of us can now seriously assume ourselves to be the centered subject of a narrative of University education. Feminism is exemplary here for its introduction of a radical awareness of gender difference, as are analyses that call attention to the ways in which bodies are differentially marked by race. Both are targeted by the old guard, because they remind them that no individual professor can embody the University, since that body would still be gendered and racially marked rather than universal," (10).

Later, he says "[i]n an entirely welcome sense, they signal the end of "culture" as a regulatory ideal that could unite community and communication so as to allow the analogy between the University and the modern state to function," (Readings, 89). Without such a regulatory ideal, the university could neither progress forward into a new era of study nor turn back to its habits, allowing itself to sink into a foundation that has

become quicksand.

The very fragmentation opened up the critical idea of there being cultures, some being defined as legitimate and some not. While this is a fantastic critical opportunity for students, the national culture at large, in a capitalistic context, can no longer see the university as offering an objectively good product. The university has now become a site of conflicting and differing visions of what the university should offer. Though there has always been division and debate in the past, the new explication of this debate in the rise of sub cultures demolished the ideological foundation of culture to the university.

To be clear, I am in no way leveling blame on the movements of the 60s for the present day crises in the humanities. These movements forced a worthwhile progression, but, in their fragmentation of culture, they revealed a long festering problem the humanities had been able to ignore up until then. Until then, the humanities had justified itself largely on that central mission of the university at large, the initiation into culture and thus into the ascending movement into high culture. Without the natural ideological ability to be assumed as legitimate just by virtue of being the path to high culture, the humanities had to deal with a fractured sense of responsibility. To what and to whom must the humanities pledge its allegiance?

Its internal confusion rippled out into general confusion. Ideally, the humanities would have been able to take the radicalism of the 60s and truly restructure itself around it, retaining the radical energy in an institutional spirit. Instead, the humanities consumed the new subjects and tried to march on like it had been before. As Allan Bloom recognizes "[v]ague insistence that without the humanities we will no longer be civilized rings very hollow when no one can say what ‘civilized’ means, when there are said to be

many civilizations that are all equal. The claim of ‘the classic’ loses all legitimacy when the classic cannot be believed to tell the truth," (374). The destruction of the split between civilization and barbarism into a pluralization of culture ruptured the foundation of the humanities. Though Bloom wants to return to the split, he does recognize that once it has been exploded, the same rhetoric will no longer work. Education will have to find another justification.

Despite this, much of its current meta-theory stubbornly marches on anyway past the changing context of its practice; it still gives the canon primacy of content and the initiation as primacy of mission. Ultimately, the humanities' past made itself vulnerable to the twin futures of multiculturalism and neoliberalism by being unable to fully take advantage of the first and remaining too weak to withstand the second.

To fully understand where we are now, we need to take a specific look at the humanities’ past to see how its practice, even when it was strong, withered itself until it could be corroded by the present context of market forces. Cultural studies only revealed what had been there all along, so we must understand what it revealed to understand how the market forces could dismantle it.

Classical Humanities and the Encroachment of Neoliberalism

Classical Humanities

Unfortunately, this is not the space for a detailed history of the humanities, something that would be essential for really understanding how its current incarnation came into being and where it might be headed. While I can include a few glimpses of its history (largely from Gerald Graff's *Professing Literature* and Stanley Aronowitz's *The Knowledge Factory*, both of which I recommend for more history), the focus will have to be on how the humanities is selectively remembered to have been.

In the current climate of humanities education, wherein literature, classics, and history departments receive little funding and are often seen as tangential add-ons to professional education, political conservatives and leftists often find an odd space of agreement. Anyone who supports humanities education seems to find agreement that what it currently is must change. When political agreement is impossible to find around an issue like healthcare for instance, this agreement is astounding. Of course, from this agreement, there is a great disagreement about where we must go.

Conservatives, as in much of their politics, tend to posit an idealized vision of the past that current changes have tarnished, a past that we need to reclaim. Especially in American politics, conservatives tend to espouse an Eden-like narrative in every political issue, as if the past was as good as it could get and it was only naive temptation for more that made us fall from grace. Supposedly bulletproof arguments include citing the thoughts of centuries old founding fathers, strict interpretations of historical documents treated as absolute truth, and, most importantly for this discussion, the resting of most of their arguments on a particular vision of human nature that casts it is an objective fact to

be recognized or dangerously ignored. Though the "conservative" moniker is too general a one to use in every context, both moral conservatives and market conservatives (and their frequent intersections) can be grouped together by their use of this fundamental argument. Both settle on the idea that we have fallen from a naturally balanced place in the past, and that progressives of any kind, whether they be feminist women, radical African Americans, leftist educators, or simple reformers, have pushed us into an imbalanced, unnatural aberration of the way things are supposed to be. We must either allow the natural market to decide or reassert the natural moral authority of conservative Christian values, or both.

The Strict Canon

In humanities education, this emerges in a number of ways but most distinctly through the force of the canon. The canon is simultaneously a specific content of books and a specific set of standards for accepting books into such a canon. This is a tense contradiction, but conservatives embody it by way of neutralization. The books mostly firmly embedded in the canon are the ones that have long ago been accepted, books that are almost always flattened, sucked dry of whatever radical potential they may have had, to leave them with a conservative ethos. This becomes overt when calls for censorship and complete curriculum elimination are called for but this usually takes on the much more sophisticated form of neutralization, wherein a text is husked from anything that might incite radical change.

The humanities would never have had a significant hold in education if they didn't include some change though. The change tends to be severely localized to the individual, limited to a nostalgia for a romantic era vision of authorship and interpretation. Change is

meant to occur as a one way process from text to reader, as an objective transmission of meaning from, as Matthew Arnold legendarily said, "the best that has ever been thought or said" to the reader. John Stuart Mill, a philosopher from a similar time, distilled much of the romantic vision into the idea that the author must cleanse himself of social inclinations and retreat into an absolute solitude, a supposedly pure space wherein the individual can access a truth universal to all humanity: “[what] we have said to ourselves, we may tell to others afterwards; what we have said or done in solitude, we may voluntarily reproduce when we know that other eyes are upon us. But no trace of consciousness that any eyes are upon must be visible in the work itself,” (1216). Truth was reached not through self-consciousness of the social self but through the purification of the self as an isolated being. Even beyond the fact that such solitude was politically limited to a specific class of individual and validated as such for the same individuals, this idea is fundamentally predicated on the notion of a universal human nature.

Conservatives have inherited this justification as well as this standard for their canon formation, expecting or rationalizing the writers to have written under such circumstances and demanding, in an educational context, for readers to do the same. Readers are expected, even disciplined, to be able to read a canonical text deeply and emerge from a solitary reading with a deeper insight into the human condition. Communal discussions, if they are used, function in order to discover an individual and universally applicable definition of humanity. The canon can then be seen as transhistorical because it evinces a certain objective humanity. The canon is continued on the basis of its abilities to reach and display this supposedly universal status of human nature.

As many of these texts were difficult, some because of historical distance and some because of pure density, this process took a strict regime of discipline and hard work. Analysis required the best academic version of wrung hands hewing, cutting, and sawing to discover a kind of nugget of truth embedded in these words. The kinds of men that could afford this education and could weather its labor were supposed to emerge as leaders, as new bearers of the universal truths found in these texts. Emerging from a solitary reflection, these men could graduate from the university not quite to share the knowledge in democratic fashion but to lead with it in an authoritative fashion. This is the classic form of culture as a path of ascension, and these men, as more cultured and knowledgeable beings, could lead their fellow men on the correct paths.

Especially in American cultural narratives, this kind of labor could almost stack up to respectable blue-collar jobs that also involved working hard with objective material to fashion a certain product. When applied to kids, to students, it was all about discipline and confidence, discovering the leader within that could further propagate these values. "When our students are taught such things as 'the humanities' they are almost always taught that these classic texts embody, express, represent what is best in our, that is, the only, tradition. Moreover, they are taught that such fields as the humanities and such subfields as 'literature' exist in a relatively neutral political element, that they are to be appreciated and venerated, that they define the limits of what is acceptable, appropriate, and legitimate as far as culture is concerned," (Said, 21). The narrative that then transmits the canon is one that neutralizes itself as a political framework, erasing its power of legitimation so that its selection appears natural. By claiming to embody tradition and humanity itself, they marginalize that which it doesn't select. At all points, a transcendent

poetics tries to forget that "a literature curriculum embodies a theory of the text and seeks to do more than simply have students read works," (Purves, 8). There is no such thing as a neutral transmission of text, and the ideological framing that masks any canon as such is motivated by a politics that wants to sustain its dominance.

Restricting The Moving Canon

As history progresses however, even the staunchest of conservatives will have to allow new texts to enter the curriculum, though the oldest and most revered are still given the highest status. The standard is then always based on whether or not additions to the canon can instill, or, rather, reaffirm a certain idea of human nature. Texts with any radical potential are then disqualified, usually delegitimized, exactly because they are radical, because they pose a certain idea of change or posit something that needs to be changed. If a text at all internalizes change as something necessary, then it shows its color as a political work rather than a canonical one. Political texts, or political readings of texts, found themselves on the idea that that history and readings of it are historical and thus, changeable. Such texts, often from those in minority power such as women and people of color that need change the most, are delegitimized on the very political basis that should make them valuable. By positioning themselves as forces for change, these texts and these readings weaken the force of universal human nature so they must either be eliminated or neutralized.

Of course, the texts that are currently canonized have not been cherry picked entirely based on their values. Rather, they have been retrofitted, reinterpreted in the very process of canonical institutionalization to be conservative, to support the status quo. This is proven when different interpretive schemas, such as psychoanalysis, feminist, and

Marxist interpretations, are accused of being mere projections, whereas the traditional interpretation is somehow objective and natural. Canonical texts are thus neutralized both by restricting the texts themselves and restricting the kinds of legitimate interpretation to such readings that allow them to "transcend" their histories by confirming our present visions of history.

Divisive texts and readings that open themselves up to different and competing meanings are delegitimized as lesser because they do not transcend all conflict to a pure space of objective meaning. Especially when drawing a canon on which to base an education, "[t]he curriculum, it is thought, should represent the enduring masterpieces and truths that are left standing after ephemeral turf wars and arcane controversies have fallen away. It is also thought that the heat and acrimony of controversy are threats to intellectual community and curricular coherence and a distraction from students' primary experience of literature" (Graff, vii). Conflict internal and external to the text is repressed, marginalized, silenced, and delegitimized. Only texts that can be and have been purified from such divisiveness can be allowed within a teachable canon. John Dewey shows how such a methodology can be traced back to a nostalgia for the grandness of Greek ideas warped by a Medieval age that treated the Greeks as gospel (147). In this period, human writing from the Greek age was cast in the divine glow of the holy canon, similarly treating it as something revered and unassailable, beyond critique. This nostalgia is then linked to treating the canon not as an authority but as the final authority. They pretend to repeat the Greeks but they actually repeat the Medievalists repeating the Greeks.

Though even the classic texts have all gone under historical changes, these are

ideologically masked, often with the idea that the author's intention was the truest truth (though it sometimes takes time to fully discover it) or by simply focusing on the parts of the texts that are most easily generalizable. Each text is, historically, a complex of contradictions and differences but a transcendental interpretation can hide this, repress it by vaunting anything general to the status of being universal and shedding everything else. In Jameson's terms, any such interpretation is a "strategy of containment" which seeks to "project the illusion that their readings are somehow complete and self sufficient," (10). Texts and the canons they compose are ideologically forgotten as being subject to a history of fashion and developing tastes: "[c]anons are capricious human selections among artifacts and are subject to change as the criteria change," (Purves, 5).

As Jameson goes on to say, "[i]n the aesthetic realm, indeed, the process of cultural 'universalization' (which implies the repression of the oppositional voice, and the illusion that there is only one genuine 'culture') is the specific form taken by what can be called the process of legitimation in the realm of ideology and conceptual systems," (86). Universalization and the poetics that accompanies inherently involve a process of legitimation, delegitimization, and oppression. Dialectically, every universalizing approach is ideological because it attempts to objectify the textual and generalize it as a framework, usually of human nature. "Every universalizing approach, whether the phenomenological or the semiotic, will from the dialectical point of view be found to conceal its own contradictions and repress its own historicity," (Jameson, 109).

We end up with a conservative canon and a conservative set of inclusive and interpretive standards for such texts, all predicated on and supporting the essential, fundamental core of modern capitalism: that of the pure individual divorced from

sociality, severed from history, and free in its unconscious unfreedom. This is the traditional form of the humanities, with professors as vanguards of high culture, truth as universal but worked out by a select group of men, and students as ascending recipients of knowledge. Of course, there is no divine curriculum that hands down which books are the ones that must be read, so we must always remember that in the background, behind the curtains, there is always a select group of people picking a select group of texts. This canon starts in certain human actions, but beneath the sedimented layers of years becomes fossilized into seeming natural, a framework for the construction of knowledge that we no longer see as artificial. Questioning whether or not Shakespeare should be included in a canon of essential literature, for instance, would be tantamount to heresy. One need not even argue the reasons because one can simply heft the weight of history.

The Withering of Tradition

The texts, the interpretations, and subsequently the students are insulated from the idea of anything other than an untainted individual, somehow pure from a contamination that is essential to its formation. This is formally echoed as traditionalists call to a supposed past wherein the text was analyzed on its own without the "superfluous" interpretations of such people as literary theorists, deconstructionists, feminists, Marxists, or whosever else they claim is merely a fad. Graff calls this "motif" an

> "appeal to 'literature itself' against various forms of commentary about literature as a cure for institutional dilemmas. The hope is that salvation can be achieved if only the great literary works can be freed from the institutional and professional encumbrances that come between students or laymen and the potency of the work itself. For a long time it was positivistic scholarship that was the target of this view, then it became analytic criticism, and today it has become literary theory and various attempts to historicize literature. But the basic form of the 'literature itself' argument remains the same, bespeaking the perennial wish to believe that if the quality of individual instruction is good and the right works are taught, the effect of the whole will take care of itself," (10).

Within the idea of a canon and the idea of a pure literature is the ideology of a pure individual, an essentially liberal notion. This is the narrative around which traditional humanities education is tied, a narrative that itself espouses the ossification of ideological frameworks justified by a vision of humanity as a natural and singular entity. In natural order, all other narratives must then fall in line with this one, including the narratives of education and culture.

Here, we can begin to see that this notion of text is not simply a particular line of dry literary discussion but is indicative of a dangerously congealed ideological framework that continues to justify the encroachment of marketization. Even moral conservatives that would deny the desire for market values to corrupt Christian ones implicitly allow for this invasion by insisting on a conservative narrative for human nature. The further this forced naturalism narrativizes human nature, the further new forms of market reality can be assimilated as natural and inevitable, entrenching their status as irremovable. Even as some conservatives call for a backward reclamation change, they make it impossible by embedding themselves in a tradition of inertia. Unfortunately for them, this inertia has begun to run out, and, while a certain version of that ideological framework remains, the power and content of the canon and the traditional humanities has become weaker and has lost momentum. In education, this means that the encroachment of marketization has both become the dominant force in education and the standard for its own justification.

The humanities remains a withered, corrupted form of what it used to be, malnourished by its self induced purification of the ability to both reflect on external history and incorporate it in such a way so as to be a force of change and of itself.

Without it being able to be oriented toward the future, the humanities has either pressed its nose into the present to watch its own demise or turned away from this portent, heedlessly calling back to the past. This desire is rooted in a number of things but there's one that all educators can actually agree on: the reestablishment of education's foundation.

The traditional humanities are inextricably tied to the idea of ascending culture – to the ideological framework that culture is something hierarchal that one ascends or descends. In the past, such statuses were tied to people's essential natures (one was noble by blood rather than effort) but in its modern incarnation, one is supposed to ascend or descend in culture by will (or failure of) alone. For much of education's history, this model fit perfectly with the traditional humanities because they had built up a canon that both justified a certain sense of values explicitly and justified the model of cultural ascension. Even as the specifics of such ascension gradually and unconsciously changed, the framework of this movement was ideologically congealed.

The traditional humanities sewed the seeds of its own destruction with this framework by implicitly supporting it as they stepped aside from it. They stepped away from it by supporting the illusion they were not political agents reinforcing a certain kind of system and were somehow objective observers that simply called it as they saw it. When the changing world finally began to change their values, or at least the symbolic expressions of them, they were not engaged in a manner that allowed them to reverse the process. Allan Bloom, a fierce defender of the traditional humanities, argues “the human desire to know is permanent, that all it really needs is the proper nourishment, and that education is merely putting the feast on the table," (51). If, however, education is merely

the setting of a table, then it could not be prepared for what came beyond the dining room. The traditional vision of the humanities is essentially a view of the student as passive entity, as a consumer of universal knowledge objectified in a "feast." Students and educators alike were not engaged in their education as something that actively related to reality but relegated themselves to the passivity of hungry children.

Once this tradition passed, such traditionalists could only harken back to what increasingly became through the glow of nostalgia a vision of a more peaceful, perfect, content time. This time never quite existed because history has always been a progression of divisive changes; at one point, literature itself was not considered central to the humanities, much less to education in general. Still, this time has nostalgia, has a powerful attraction, because this culture stood as a foundation on which education could be supported. As previously discussed, education boomed after the Sputnik moment largely because a vision of culture existed in such a manner to support education. After the betrayal of the counter culture, the foundation of culture as a singular entity was ruptured and so the foundation of the humanities and education in general was fractured.

Because of this repressed past, we have to remember that even when the conservatives call for a return to a traditional humanities, they are implicitly calling for a return to a powerful education. A traditional canon, a lecture based classroom, a peaceful student body, all have become symbols for a stronger culture supporting a stronger education. Even for those that do not align themselves with conservative values, this call is a powerful one. People can always trick themselves into believing that if only we changed the outward signs, the inner material conditions would change as well. The above discussion has shown, with the boundless support of many other critics with even

more robust arguments, that this kind of culture was never as united as we remember. As Michael Apple says, "[a] uniform culture never truly existed in the Unites States, only a selective version, an invented tradition that is reinstalled (though in different forms) in times of economic crisis and a crisis in authority relations, both of which threaten the hegemony of the culturally and economically dominant," (34). We aren't remembering something that actually happened but are ensnaring ourselves in nostalgia for an image, a picture, an icon that we have let determine our resistance rather than determine it ourselves. We want the old humanities because of what it could do.

A Forgotten History

We, however, cannot and should not go back. Repressed beneath this memory, this ideological image of a forsaken Eden, is the truth of a history of education sat flush alongside imperialism, racism, sexism, and the general capitalist order as a reinforcer. By positioning itself as the ascendent peak of higher education, the humanities, though it didn't heft the guns, supported a system that subjugated people the world over. By taking advantage of its place in the hierarchy, it supported the structure and the history that constituted it. We have to be self conscious of the fact that despite conservative rhetoric, they are calling for a political change. Within the guise of nostalgia, they will pretend this call for tradition is merely an apolitical stance, a return to a history that never existed. The past becomes natural and well remembered while the present and future are tainted as unnatural intrusions and new fangled failures. This call though, is not apolitical but has a particular political stance.

The canon had its birth in an essentially colonialist imperialist framework, simply finding its focus more on cultural and mental colonization rather than physical. From

abroad to home, the canon was used as a cultural weapon, as a tool for the colonizing of the mind, a symbolic imperialism tied in both a material and immaterial sense to material imperialism.

An example can be found in the writings of Thomas Babington Macaulay, who was one of the men in charge of demonstrating the value of British culture as power over India was transferred from the East India Company to the British crown. It was largely his influence that directed this imperialist power to adopt policies in line with implanting the English language and its literature among the colonized peoples of India. A brief study from his *Minute on Indian Education* reveals how the attitudes surrounding canon formation existed alongside imperialist colonialist ideology.

First of all, it was taken as an assumption that the goal was the "intellectual improvement of the people of this country," (1897) with the common understanding that "the dialectics commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India contain neither Literary nor scientific information, and are, moreover so poor and rude that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them," (1897). The canon had to be formed because "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of Indian and Arabia," (1897). This canon was then a weapon to oppress through education, displacing the Indian identity with an English one. Further, this canon was explicitly argued on market grounds as "English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East […] the English tongue is that which would be the most useful to our native subjects," (1898). The canon is then tied to both an economic and a

cultural concern as the English recognized the impossibility of teaching everyone and focused instead on installing a higher culture reflective of their own:

> "it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population," (1900-1901).

The canon is then explicitly not the transmission of truth but the transmission of high culture, complete with its ascending motion.

Upon entering the university, either by force or choice, the entering mind must be vacated for the entrance of dominant ideas, here disguised as the true and universal. The students are ever positioned as passive recipients of knowledge, that knowledge legitimated as objective and universal by a similarly objective and universal authority. The ideological dominance and transmission is not in the content itself (Shakespeare and Plato are many things but they are never one thing, so even as their interpretation has changed never has the idea that one interpretation is right) but in the structure of the transmission and reception. Disguised in the idea that these texts were ascension into universal knowledge was the ideology of a very specific class trying to reproduce a specific material context of dominance and subordination.

The history of the traditional humanities is inextricably linked up with subjugation. From beyond our borders to within our own, this canon was used to dominate and subordinate certain groups of people. The radical knowledge we must remember going forward is that this canon cannot simply be reformed. Though we leave room for the possibility of it being radically remade, it is, in a sense, beyond saving (not

the texts themselves, but their organization). The canon's essence is founded on the idea that culture is something that should be implanted into someone for them to achieve a certain status as a legitimate person. The arbitrary artificiality of the canon is hidden, and crushed beneath this sedimentation is the silence of marginalized voices. The very construction of a legitimate set of texts implicitly delegitimizes texts that do not qualify. Pushed to the side are certainly a number of texts of lesser quality, but mixed in among them are texts eliminated for much more insidious reasons.

If the canon is meant to establish a certain historical social order, then one can't include texts that conflict with that, so we see the disappearance of texts from subordinate voices, the voices most likely to rebel. In the interest of peace and the desire for an illusory universality, we construct a canon that is by and large filled with voices from upper classes, male throats, and white skins. Though we may pretend these texts are simply better, that it is simply more efficient to teach these canonical ones, to reinforce the idea that these texts are actually universal in their truth necessitates the marginalization of other texts. For this ascending form of culture implantation to function, there must be a single path to a single higher culture. To allow for multiple paths leading in different directions would be to introduce chaos and to rupture the legitimacy of authority. With strong currents of racism and sexism, the canon had to remain pure and untarnished, explicitly by texts that might question the content and the organization, and even implicitly by the idea that only certain readings and interpretations were valid.

In essence, humanities education and literature in general tried to keep itself pure of external social reality (in accordance with liberal ideology) but in so doing, helped

create the conditions for its own demise. Traditionalists were and are political agents in that they support this form of culture and all of the oppressions it contains therein, but that was largely done implicitly; explicitly, they stepped back from politics to pretend to be objective observers. Without this engagement in external reality, the neoliberal market intrusion discovered an educational framework ripe for corrosion, commodification, and elimination.

Cultural studies As Lifting The Veil

Cultural studies destroyed the university only by destroying its past. The university had long been in tension with the fear of a technocratic, commercialized future and the idealized, cultural past but the rise of cultural studies showed that this past never existed. The culture the old humanities represented was not a universal one but was merely the dominant one represented as the total. By reforming sub cultures and culture itself into objects of study, the university could no longer proceed under the assumption that it was the bearer of total culture. Some students would take some classes and some students would take others but it could no longer be fully assumed that any would emerge with universal clarity. Cultural studies exposed universal study as specific study.

Conservatives then and still do fear this insurrection because of the idea that "any de-centering of Western civilizations, of the white male canon, is really an act of cultural genocide," (hooks, 32). They often fight it in their own ideological terms, afraid that "everyone who supports cultural diversity wants to replace one dictatorship of knowing with another, changing one set way of thinking for another" (hooks, 32) because cultural studies actual holds a much more revolutionary force.

Cultural studies then takes the heat of the conservative traditionalists because it is

seen as destroying the foundation of education by destroying culture, when, in fact, no such singular identity existed, and cultural studies merely exposed this illusion. The ascending form of culture and traditional humanities education constituted its fundamental value from exclusion and marginalization, from legitimation and silence. It survived by way of selective tradition and ideological ossification. At worst, cultural studies exposed a weak point that neoliberalism exploited, but neoliberalism would have found it anyway, or burrowed its own way through. After all, though we may personify such political ideologies, they don't actually function like military strategists. The encroachment of neoliberalism was a collective complicity, reinforcement, and creation.

Cultural studies pulled the veil off a culture that was already deeply corrupted from the inside out, having marginalized a majority of voices, pacified students with passive interpretations, insulated itself from external social and political reality, solidified itself into specific canons, and become an education that founded its importance on being the sharpest peak of a culture of ascension. By marginalizing all culture it situated as below itself, low, popular, and sub, it made the fall and the harshness of it all the more inevitable as it did nothing to change the development of capitalism. The format of ascending culture still survives it but with lessening power every day, its supposed peak having been shown to be a farce. The ideological ossification was far too much even for the radicalism of the 60s to overcome though, so even as culture loses its power, the hierarchal structure moves on. The peak is no longer defined by the amassing of cultural capital though, rather it has transformed, reduced and condensed and distilled itself into the hoarding of wealth, capital itself. Neoliberalism signals the death of culture and the vaunting of the commodity into culture, bringing the market through to dominate all life

right out in the open.

After the Sputnik moment and the cultural civil war of the 60s, the cultural framework, the foundation of the university, was disintegrated as a meta-cultural concept to be assumed rather than studied. As Marx long predicted in the spread of capital: "big industry created everywhere the same relations between the classes of society, and thus destroyed the peculiar individuality of the various nationalities [...] big industry created a class, which in all nations has the same interest and with which nationality is already dead; a class which is really rid of all the old world and at the same time stands pitted against it," (185). As capital spreads across the globe, it flattens and homogenizes culture, making it a subsection of the market rather than its own standalone idea.

As culture is globalized, it is disconnected from any particular nationality. With this loss, so goes the national cultural foundation that held up the university. After already having been corrupted from the inside, it was doomed to fall:

> "the link between the University and the nation-state no longer holds […] the University thus shifts from being an ideological apparatus of the nation-state to being a relatively independent bureaucratic system. The economics of globalization mean that the University is no longer called upon to train citizen subjects, while the politics of the end of the Cold War mean that the University is no longer called upon to uphold national prestige by producing and legitimating national culture. The University is thus analogous to a number of other institutions-such as national airline carriers-that face massive reductions in foreseeable funding from increasingly weakened states, which are no longer the privileged sites of investment of popular will," (Readings, 14).

Without a cultural foundation, the university and the nation at large found a new basis in the market. With this shift, as left open by traditional humanities and pushed through with capitalist ideology, the university was to be subsumed as just another business in the neoliberal system.

The Rise of Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism

As Raymond Williams says, "[t]he educational institutions are usually the main agencies of the transmission of an effective dominant culture, and this is now a major economic as well as cultural activity; indeed it is both in the same moment," (Williams, 9). Encased within any educational moment throughout history is the ideological reinforcement of a certain dominant culture. As Williams himself sketches, there are usually residual and emergent strands of resistance within this dominance but the force of this contradiction almost always benefits the current dominant culture. As discussed previously, traditional humanities education implicitly supported almost anything the United States did by reinforcing a certain notion of culture that allowed for the subjugation of other cultures. Even within the national narrative, humanities education was based on the commodification and neutralization of texts that supported the status quo by purveying a supposedly universal truth through the ideological framework of passive consumption.

Now more than ever though, Williams' quote becomes all the more pertinent. Though dominant culture has always signaled a certain dominant economics, the disarming of high culture in the 60s revealed the invasion of a new ideology that sought to shred all pretenses at superstructure and reduce culture to its base, to rend the flesh from its bones. Capitalist ideology honed itself over history into the creation of its most powerful justification: itself. No longer would market and liberal ideologies have to hide beneath the transmission of tangential, superfluous high culture but would merely transform the market itself into culture. The market narrative has now become the

absolute master narrative, the story in which everything must play a part according to its rules and scripts.

Neoliberalism is a broad term that generally ties together a new strain of capitalist ideology that justifies the current capitalist state. "Neo" refers to the modification of classical liberal ideology, a philosophical worldview that privileges the position of the individual to an analytical dominance: "[t]he neo or new aspect of this liberalism comes from the ways in which neoliberalism alters the liberal economic theory to correspond to new material conditions," (Saunders, 45). In liberal analysis, the individual is of paramount concern, each person being the primary unit of rights and actions. For many, this seems like a common sense idea, which, before we even decide whether it is correct or not, means it has become a congealed ideological framework that we have a priori assumed. This takes on the perspective of conservatism as "neoliberal ideology wraps itself in what appears to be unassailable common sense," (Giroux, 251). Even before we consider other ideologies, we must do our best to hold our current one at a special distance of examination. As Gramsci said, common sense is always conservative because it holds to the sense of the time. If we want to progress forward, we need to be able to get enough distance to critically think about the state of things.

As always with these broad historical movements, it is difficult to nail down a specific time. Saunders, as well as other thinkers, would pin neoliberalism down to emerging into dominance sometime over the past thirty years. "During this time, the classical liberalism that defined United States economic and social policy during the nineteenth and early twentieth century has been revitalized, intensified, and its scope has been extended," (Saunders, 42). Neoliberalism, however, did not invent the primacy of

the individual out of thin air but rather appropriated it from a bygone era, using nostalgia very similarly to the traditional humanities scholars to adapt people to believing that there was a fall from a grace that we need to reclaim.

Neoliberals use the language of the past as lessons for the future, quoting the founding fathers as divine prophets, who molded a philosophy themselves primarily from John Locke, and using iconography, imagery, and myths from the 1920s and 30s as fodder to recast the icon of the 21st century as the industrial titan: "[c]reated in the mid 1970s as a response to economic stagflation in which a steep recession is combined with a rise in prices, neoliberalism is a return to and extension of the laissez faire economic theory that reigned until the 1930s but adapted to a new economic and social world," (Saunders, 45). Neoliberal ideology casts everyone back into the narrative of the factory line, except without the factory line itself, meaning that we must become essentially economic actors.

The neoliberal assumes human nature and on top of that assumes the marketplace as the primary instance of that nature in action, thus extending an "economic rationality to cultural, social, and political spheres" and redefining the "individual from a citizen to an autonomous economic actor," (Saunders, 42). One of the key assumptions here is that of "autonomy," the idea being that individuals are isolated units of human nature, and that any relation therein must fit into marketplace ideology, assuming that "free-market relationships are the expression of a truly free society," (Saunders, 46). Individuals are ideologically preconfigured as being absolutely isolated from one another, their relationships always being mediated by capital exchange.

Further, "[neoliberals] have complete faith in free trade and believe that

competition will naturally lead to economic growth, global prosperity, and will necessarily benefit all individuals. If such growth and prosperity does not occur, they contend it is due to outside interference in the market's operations, which are naturally and internally regulated," (Saunders, 46). We can see this ideology emerge linguistically in terms such as "intrusion" and "regulation" that are applied when the government does something to the market, whether that is a bailout or a review. It is assumed that the natural state of human beings is one of market exchange so that any interference in this natural relationship must be an external unnatural one. If the marketplace is the natural instance of humanity at work, then any "forceful" external act must be an intrusion, an infection.

This ideology is an inherently ahistorical analysis because it assumes a particular vision of human nature and human relationships that supposedly persists throughout history (or at least since the founding fathers) and further, is assumed natural enough to justify propagating it throughout the world as recent imperialist efforts at "democracy spreading" prove. As usual in imperialist narratives, there is a specific vision of human nature that one must comply with and rather than accept a different kind of human, one must delegitimize them as inhuman because they do not comply to what is "natural."

Achieving Dominance

The primacy of market relationships as "true" or "real" relationships has become materially dominant. Even as its ahistorical nature is proved with a look back at other periods of human relationships, it can even be disproven in our time, with studies of bonds between people as family members, friends, and lovers. Still, neoliberalism foists the market relationship as the primary one by giving it material power. One may be

deeply unhappy without these non-market relationships but one can only starve and die without the persistence of one's market relationship. All relationships can then be ground down to this "bottom line" depending on the circumstances. The market is the ultimate standard, but, further, it is held up as the natural, objective, and inevitable standard for humanity vis-á-vis a particular vision of human nature. Here, we see where some of the conservative traditionalist humanities scholars find some grip, because arguments in favor of human nature can always be fitted to justify the current state of things. Any narrative based in human nature can be retrofitted to conservatism.

Narratives such as these are necessary because on the face of it, neoliberalism does not seem natural in a material sense. Wealth inequality has increased at staggering rates on a global scale, and, even within the proud United States, the disparity between the richest and the poorest has widened dramatically, in a sense completing Marx's analysis of capital's destiny: "[a]ccumulation, where private property prevails, is the *concentration* of capital in the hands of a few, it is in general an inevitable consequence if capitals are left to follow their natural course, and it is precisely through competition that the way is cleared for this natural destination of capital," (41). Neoliberalism however, can always justify this because they believe in the natural efficieny of the market, especially in its ability to generate the maximum amount of wealth: "[t[his is not to say that the market will eliminate economic inequality (quite the opposite is true in that a certain level of unemployment is required in any capitalist system), but rather that the free market will allegedly ensure that such inequality is based on the amount of effort or ‘hard work’ one exerts and the level of natural ability with which one is born" (Saunders, 46). By strictly individualizing people into isolated units, neoliberalism

ensures that "there are no social problems, only individual challenges, and there cannot be a social solution to an individual challenge without restricting the individual's freedom," (Saunders, 48).

People are then simultaneously blamed for what they can accomplish in society and are told that any collective effort to change such a situation would then somehow restrict individual rights. People are allowed to do whatever they want except for gathering together. Despite being social beings inherently constituted and limited by their historical cultures, humans are instead restricted to themselves, cut off from the world that created them as they are blamed for what it does to them. This both limits people to seeing themselves as market commodities and fractures their abilities to collect together and change the system. Despite the ideology of marketplace relationships as natural and inevitable, the history of humanity proves differently. There have been different systems, and different systems can be created. Further, if we make the radical assumption that humanity's natural state is one of happiness and satisfaction, then capitalism does not at all fit; in fact, it relies on people feeling their positions are inherently unstable. This comes across clearest in their economic roles with jobs.

Even as politicians argue back and forth about unemployment rates and who will create jobs or rather, let the market create jobs, none can acknowledge the fact that capitalism is predetermined to have a great amount of unemployment. The advance of industry has in effect produced the advance of poverty, a symptom that Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno analyzed in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in 1944 but has only worsened since then: "[n]ow that the livelihood of those still needed to operate the machines can be provided with a minimal part of the working time which the masters of

society have at their disposal, the superfluous remainder, the overwhelming mass of the population are trained as additional guards of the system, so that they can be used today and tomorrow as material for its grand designs. They are kept alive as an army of unemployed," (Horkheimer, 30). As Marx pointed out long ago when capitalism was still ascending, the very laws of supply and demand that capitalism founds itself on also require there to be a pool of workers without work: "[w]hen political economy claims that demand and supply always balance each other, it immediately forgets that according to its own claim (theory of population) the supply of people always exceeds the demand, and that, therefore, in the essential result of the whole production process–the existence of man–the disparity between demand and supply gets its most striking expression," (100). Unemployment is not an isolated problem to be solved but is a necessary consequence of the capitalistic system. More than that, it is a necessary part of the dynamic functioning of capitalist production. Even in times of fantastic production produced by such dynamism, poverty must always exist: "[p]overty as the antithesis between power and impotence is growing beyond measure, together with the capacity permanently to abolish poverty," (Horkheimer, 30).

With exploitation constantly rampant, workers also simply won't do many of the jobs capitalists would require of them if the threat of poverty did not exist. If there was more supply than there was demand, then businesses would be unable to function at peak efficiencies, and, while the businesses are in control of the market, it must be tilted in their favor. To function at their maximums, they must rather keep supply lower than the amount of demand so that there are always enough hands to work and there is pressure in case any one of those hands doesn't work hard enough.

Neoliberalism, thanks to its ideological ossification, gets to have its cake and eat it too. It simultaneously claims that capitalism is best for everyone as a collective and blames people individually for not being satisfied. At all points, the individual must be cut off from the social world and act in their natural state; for capitalism, it is that of the rational economic actor. If the natural state of human beings is that of collective profit making, then any human that does not contribute to this would be unnatural and wrong. Further, if a human tries to participate in this marketplace but is denied for such social reasons as gender, race, upbringing, or past historically determined inequalities, then this social disqualification is localized to the individual, refitting the fault to be theirs. In typical rhetoric, we see the blame being defined as laziness, unwillingness to the play the game that is assumed we must all play. After denying socially determined problems, neoliberals can then let them slip in through the backdoor, allowing implicitly racist or sexist people to further justify an impoverished person's place by a multiplicity intersecting power relations, all functioning but all denied.

Neoliberal Ideology

To understand this as an ideology, we must let go of ideology being a mere repressive false consciousness, a brainwashing propaganda tool used by the big wigs in charge. Though there are certainly people that benefit from this system and reinforce it with their power, that power enters into society in a number of more sophisticated ways than mere repression. First of all, it ties directly into the myth of the self-made man, the rags to riches narrative that America has founded itself on. Denying the market is then akin to denying our nation's origin, a cultural contradiction that is practically heretical. Despite neoliberalism denying our social beings, it benefits from it because the language

we use to articulate ourselves is largely determined by the system in place. Rather than individuating ourselves as social beings, we are encouraged to individuate ourselves as mere individuals, in essence collapsing the social dialectic into one side so that we grow up stunted in isolation. As John Russon shows in his analysis of human experience, and I hopefully amplify, the social is necessary for individual development. Dialectically, conflict is necessary for movement and growth, so a human in stability is a human unchanged, stagnant, degraded.

In effect, this stunting by neoliberal ideology reinforces it because people are less able to recognize what Jameson's calls a "utopian desire" to see something better. That said, we must also recognize, as Marx did, that while humans are socially and historically determined, they also take an active role in that determination. Historically, Daniel Saunders notes that:

> "[s]uccessful ideologies are grounded in our general individual experiences and attempt to reconstitute and represent them in a way that extracts consent to certain policies, institutions, and ideas. Specifically, neoliberalism was allegedly born out of necessity from the severe economic stagflation of the 1970s. Given the difficult economic times and the bleak projections for the future, people were ready to reject policies that they were repeatedly told led to the economic downturn. When provided with an alternative that appeared to solve both the larger economic woes as well as personal financial issues they welcomed change. The economic recovery that partially occurred in the 1980s and to a greater extent in the 1990s seemingly provided evidence of neoliberalism's suitability and reinforced the original claims of the inherent benefits of a neoliberal world," (50).

Neoliberalism, with the help of an economic crisis, then became its owns self fulfilling prophecy, as a renewed cultural narrative profited by way of a correlation, not necessarily a causation: "Provided with this seemingly compelling evidence, the acceptance of neoliberalism is understandable; it is reasonable for people to desire change when the current economic system is failing them, just as it is reasonable for them to believe the

new system works when they appear to benefit from it," (Saunders, 50). Once this wider cultural narrative takes hold, the general ideology ossifies into a system as people find their identities within it.

People see themselves as economic actors and find their niche roles in society by way of the marketplace. When the wider cultural narrative situates one's nation as an economic powerhouse and the individual narratives situate oneself always as part of this production, there is little room for resistance. This is easy to see when someone is asked to describe who they are, the terms emerging from the mouths usually starting with their job: "engineer," "mechanic," "writer," "student." The marketplace then becomes the natural state of humans at work with each other because it currently is.

It's important to note here how this narrative is overdetermined with other power relations, especially of masculine domination. Masculinity has long been defined less as a positive set of traits and more as the absence of femininity, the negated opposite of what is defined as weak. The gender hierarchy then situates people based not on who they are but who they appear to be, socializing them into certain gendered roles of strength and weakness, retroactively claiming these roles as natural. Masculinity can then graft onto and intersect with neoliberalism as people see their strength as being defined as the absence or devaluing of extra-market relationships. Those devoted to their jobs are well respected, rewarded for market obsession with market rewards. Men are then most susceptible to this ideology as one can prove one's manliness with career earning, and women are both expected to stay at home and are devalued for doing so. Feminism, the historical movement for the liberation of women from patriarchy, can then even be partially commodified by defining freedom in a phallocentric manner as career obsession.

Many modern feminists ask women to “lean in” and prove the value of their femininity by becoming more masculine; in a capitalist context this means earning more money on their own. In this way, patriarchy too can be overdetermined by neoliberalism as ideologies intersect and different frameworks remain unquestioned. Power sustains itself by its netlike tightening of different power relations, intersecting and pulling more taut in certain lines even as other ones are cut.

As neoliberalism denies social historical determinism, it depends on it by determining people to think of themselves as isolated units while "the market- driven juggernaut continues to mobilize desires in the interest of producing market identities and market relationships that ultimately sever the link between education and social change while reducing agency to the obligations of consumerism," (Giroux, 251). Humanity gets reduced to commodity consumption. Further, it denies people the ability to value other social worlds and, in a sense, forces addiction to the market rewards it does value. Getting a promotion at work or getting the latest technology can both become obsessive compulsions toward consumption. When the individual is cut off from its wider sociality, it will thirst for that satisfaction, and the market is more than ready to take advantage of that.

This ideology is especially dangerous because it fractures the human being on an individual and social level, impairing their growth, limiting their abilities, and denying them the capability of social resistance. Those in power always benefit from it, because it situates those on the bottom as deserving their suffering and those at the top as deserving their joy. The hierarchy justifies itself by its own system of individualization, fracturing everybody into their respective places and justifying their placement by the very fact of

them being there.

Human behavior then begins to be ruled by an insatiable desire for money, this "quest for an income" being, for Jameson, a "pre-desire, a precondition for desiring which has been systematically devalued in advance," (205). Financial stability is configured as something that should be pre-achieved, something that should merely be a foundation on which to launch real desires. For the multitudes of people in poverty, this means that their very desire to achieve stability is devalued and treated as petty. Commodity fetishism is lorded as the highest means of desire, but the platform on which to make these demands is denigrated.

We see this as people deride systems like welfare for helping people just scraping by, due to the very fact that they are just scraping by. If the means of being human necessitate a certain financial means, then those in poverty do not quite qualify as human. They are merely humans in waiting, potential humans; until they can become their natural forms as economic actors to take their natural place in the human marketplace of relations then they have not established the precondition for desire. Until they have earned "the indispensable prerequisite to a self-realization that never comes," (Jameson, 205), they do not even qualify for the capitalist game.

As Jameson points out, even as those stricken by poverty are denied entry, those that do qualify are still resigned to desiring something they will never quite realize. Financial stability is always the ultimate goal but it never quite comes. Capitalism, as a dynamic engine of production, rests on human discontent. It needs people to be uncomfortable, needs them to desire more than stability so that production can keep humming. Even the richest CEOs in the world still invest, still need to multiply their

profits, still need to desire and consume. The precondition for being human is the precondition for desiring, the economic base upon which one has enough tenuous safety to want more.

The Appropriation of Ascension

Always, always, there is this ascending desire for the accrual of wealth and with it the accrual of humanity. As Marx said: "[t]hat which is for me through the medium of money – that for which I can pay (i.e., which money can buy) – that am I myself, the possessor of the money. The extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money's properties are my – the possessor's – properties and essential powers," (Marx, 102). Individual and social humanity is increased by way of capital. Capital then leaks in between every social relation, market logic structuring how they conduit information. With capital mediating and isolating humanity from itself, the development of humanity then becomes ruled by money. One becomes more of a human, more capable of what humanity has collectively developed in history once one has earned enough money to buy it. "Men, then, only desire money, and money is an abstraction, a form of reflection… Men do not envy the gifts of others, their skill, or the love of their women; they only envy each others' money… These men would die with nothing to repent of, believing that if only they had the money, they might have truly lived and truly achieved something," (Kierkegaard, 2). Competition, capitalism's golden calf, is reduced not to a dynamic innovation but to the mere greed for another's money and the desire to divine a way to match their wealth. Capitalists will brag about capitalism's vast engine of production, but this massive luxury of civilization is only available to a precious few, a privilege that is defined by one's earning potential.

Through neoliberalism, capitalism has become more powerful than ever by grafting itself onto culture. The ascending motion I described as belonging to culture belongs more and more to capital. Before neoliberalism, culture and economics existed alongside each other, often justifying each other but still remaining tensely adjacent. Culture survived the same way capital did, by creating a hierarchy and treating it as an instance of human nature. As classical Marxist terminology has always pointed out though, economics have constituted the base of the culture's superstructure, and despite this highly mediated and dialectical exchange, culture has always been subsumed within capitalism. Over time, capitalism and neoliberal ideology have corroded culture from the inside out, eventually breaking through it, metamorphosing and leaving culture behind like a cocoon.

The university is just an instance of this transformation, but it serves. The university as a cultural apparatus justified itself by the cultural hierarchy, complicity repressing others by vaunting some as having earned more high culture.

It is my inclination that this corrosion is not entirely a process of gradual and regular eating away but functions more like Thomas Kuhn's paradigm shifts, but admittedly less revolutionary. Capitalism naturally contains what its proponents refer to as a "boom and bust cycle," capitalism's productive dynamism being based on its ability to reach far and occasionally fall from its height, only to pick itself back up again and reach farther. With the neoliberal ideology the marketplace as the de facto instance of natural humanity, any problem in the market is then localized to "intrusions" or "alterations" assumed to come from an unnatural outside. The busts are then blamed on some sort of interference with the natural market flow of life. This is usually configured

as something tangential from real life. Through these busts, capitalism then "recovers" by purifying its markets from outside interests, processes by which we are secularized, modernized, and isolated. Interests besides profit interests and humanity besides economic action are delegitimized, scapegoated for capitalism's own busts. Every failure of capitalism becomes a reason to double down on the natural material reality of capital exchange.

Capitalism as Crisis

Neoliberalism has become so ideological that seeing past it is nearly impossible; as said, it conditions the ability to see in this historical moment. We cannot question the supposed natural cyclicality of a system that inherently exploits people alternately exploiting them deeply or more deeply. Capitalism has recently internalized this ideology into its system, as ideological apparatuses reinforce it by institutionalizing a culture of permanent crisis. At a near constant bleat, the media and the culture at large wallow in economic misery, pining for an Eden of profit whilst trying to rid itself of whatever caused this seemingly permanent downturn. Education, now being the central mediator for market accrual rather than culture accrual, is usually situated as one of the prime causes of this constant economic crisis. This is made drastic when tied to America's global status: "the crisis in education has been tied to the crisis of the economic position of the United States in the world," (Weiler, 215).

In capitalism, people are situated in a precarious position of earning or not earning enough to live. “Americans are taught to believe the economy is in a permanent crisis - a position seemingly validated by their own experience," (Kendzior). This constant culture of crisis petrifies this precariousness through capitalism's necessary consequences: either

commit to the market or face poverty. People are then materially restrained from questioning the system because it is simultaneously what gives them life and what threatens them with death.

We have moved into what some writers call the "post employment economy" (Kendzior) wherein the constant crises of market employability force people to cling to any temporary or contingent job available. Aronowitz too worries that "American capitalism has entered the era–one hesitates to call it an epoch–of the normalization of temporary, part-time, and contingent employment," (121). While unemployment rates are bad, they are supported by a fluctuating rate of underemployed people, workers that must constantly live within the tight boom and bust cycles of their lives, getting hired only to be laid off, getting temporary work knowing they must eventually lose it, and living with awful wages and working conditions because any job fulfills the basic need for money.

Students are then taught to learn the same set of basic "employable" skills, thus reducing difference and making each of them replaceable with another. Precariousness fuels precariousness. Despite supposedly suffering from these crises, corporations greatly benefit from them. Students learn they must work for free in internships, work jobs lower than their degrees, and stunt their education to learn vocational skills just so that they can get a job. Corporations win because of the desperation of their applicants and the outsourced need to train them.

Within this always-imminent crisis, capitalism must always desperately fight for its own survival, conscripting students in this struggle. All life activity can then become alienated to the goal of preservation, which inherently helps whosever benefits from the current system: "[b]y subordinating life in its entirety to the requirements of its

preservation, the controlling minority guarantees, with its own security, the continuation of the whole," (Horkheimer, 24).

At all points, the evils inherent to capitalism are redefined as being due to an intrusion. This supposed infection then justifies the continual attempt to purify the system from interference. Neoliberals across the aisle are constantly trying to return to a supposed place of purity by shedding some disease they've managed to contract. For some, it means the shirking of government regulations, for others it means the dodging of collective and social concerns, and for many it involves isolating themselves still further as mere carriers of capital. Within crisis culture, anything can be justified as an intrusion into the market, including culture itself. For capitalism to fully eliminate intrusion, it would have to eliminate the very possibility by subsuming such extra-market externalities into its marketized internality.

Living Post-Culture

With the marketplace assumed as the natural system of human interrelationships, the culture of crisis can then justify the consumption of everything around it as not being "natural" or "real," in a word, not marketized. It is my argument then that we have entered an age of post culture or commodity culture, wherein the base has eaten the superstructure from the inside out until shedding it like tangential waste.

The ascending motion of culture has been replaced by the ascending motion of capital accumulation. No longer are the high cultural peaks dominated by those who pick up the historically defined signifiers of high culture but by the sheer volume of their wealth. People are motivated less to become cultured and more to become rich. Culture has been replaced by capital, with the remains of college being a mere ideological

shadow of what it used to be. In Bill Readings' analysis:

> "[c]ulture is not a citadel to be occupied. In fact, no one sits in the center any longer. The center was once occupied by the institution of the nation-state, which embodied capital and expressed it as a culture that radiated across the field of the social. But the decline of the nation-state means that this center is actually a lure. Capital no longer flows outward from the center, rather it circulates around the circumference behind the backs of those who keep their eyes firmly fixed on the center: Around the circumference, the global transfer of capital takes place in the hands of multi or transnational corporations. The so-called center, the nation state, is now merely a virtual point that organizes peripheral subjectivities within the global flow of capital; it is not a site to be occupied. Hence everyone seems to be culturally excluded, while at the same time almost everyone is included within the global flow of capital," (111).

Culture itself has become commodified, and now both conservative and leftist groups suffer from focusing on this empty center as if it were still filled with the bounty of high culture. Through vast marketization, such a core has been hollowed out through commodity ideology. The ascending motion and exclusionary structure has been maintained but, as Readings says, power flows around and permeates through rather than represses down. Deeper ideological lines have been created through the fissures of neoliberal ideology, wherein capital flows and accumulates along these faults as the casting of the market to frame what life can be.

To completely purify itself from "interference," capital had to colonize and commodify everything external to it, naturalizing everything outside of it to becoming internally marketized. Though the university is this study's prime example, we can see this process trailing down into the very language people use as they describe anything worthwhile as "profitable," any decision as being "worth the investment," and referring to the ultimate reality of any act as the "bottom line" (this line being the profit margin). Human actions and relationships are increasingly defined by market logic that values profit and exploitation, values as being purely for use and consumption.

In the language of economists, any person can be broken down into monetary value to be used for the economy. Most dangerously, "the very viability of politics itself is at stake, as formal and informal public spaces for educational exchange and debate atrophy or disappear altogether," (Giroux, 251). The political field itself, in whatever stunted state it currently exists, "produces an effect of censorship by limiting the universe of political discourse, and thereby the universe of what is politically thinkable, to the finite space of discourses capable of being produced or reproduced within the limits of the political problematic, understood as a space of stances effectively adopted within the field," (Bourdieu, 172). The most overt example of this is in American politics is the limitation of people to two political parties, both of which are dominantly neoliberal with only slight differences between them. This binary reduces the universe of political thinkable stances to two that oppose each other with ineffectual and ultimately petty disagreements. As the vehemence of this disagreement absorbs all public attention, the marketization of politics slips through unnoticed as neoliberal ideology solidifies humanity from its most intimate identity to its farthest reaches in culture. Humanity becomes little more than a multitude of economic agents.

As politics itself becomes neutralized, commodified, and marketized, the very possibility of envisioning and enacting change becomes ideologically precluded. This possibility is essential because, as Henry Giroux and other progressives continually remind us: "[c]orporate culture, in large measure, lacks a vision beyond its own pragmatic interests in profit and growth, seldom providing a self-critical inventory about its own ideology and its effects on public health, the environment, or the stability and gainful employment of citizens. It is difficult to imagine such concerns arising within

corporations where questions of consequence begin and end with the bottom line," (261). Without a politics that can't envision difference, marketization will corrupt humanity from its acceptance of a certain human nature that the market is natural and paramount.

The Long March of Marketization

The university in the guillotine

The university is one of many targets in a long line of marketization as "public spheres are replaced by commercial spheres, as the substance of critical democracy is emptied out and replaced by a democracy of markets, goods, services, and the increasing expansion of the cultural and political power of corporations throughout the world," (Giroux, 252). The university though, is not an arbitrary example of marketization but is a chilling model of neoliberalism's power. As said before, the university has maintained power by way of it being a cultural apparatus, the peak of ascending culture. In this sense, the university was one of if not the most powerful cultural apparatuses of its time. While fashions and tastes changed, the university remained as the arbiter and legitimator of those changes. For the university to be defeated would be a great failure.

The university has always been on the ideological chopping block, but the traditional humanities programs were never engaged enough to realize it or mount a resistance. We can see this in the historical American distrust of newly graduated college students, wherein high culture is both revered and despised. The ascending motion of culture never quite gelled with the ascending motion of capital because the hierarchies had subtly different modes of operation. The cultural hierarchy was based on the accrual of culture signifiers, arbitrarily legitimated through history, and cultural institutions that defined which signifiers denoted high, which low, and which sub. The capital hierarchy is in a sense a democratization of this process that flattens this playing field into one game of capital accrual but retains the hierarchy. In a capitalist context, culture can only endure a process of meaning less and less, especially when neoliberal ideology explicitly argues

that the market is the true relationship of human beings, not literature, not theater, not high society. Though ascending culture has complimented capitalism in the past, it can never be quite as efficient as capital simply taking its place.

The university, as a bearer of culture, has then been continually backing itself into a corner that would eventually disappear. Rather than reimagine what the university can be, traditionalists have used this corner as a platform to prove their victimization. As Bill Readings shows,

> "the holders of cultural power need to portray themselves as unorthodox rebels. It seems to me that the conservative jeremiads are motivated by the fact that their authors feel the emptiness of the cultural power they hold. That is to say, they recognize the powerlessness of the cultural power they hold, and they blame left-wing academics for usurping it. They hold the center, but they know that it is merely a virtual point. The cultural right is not rebelling against its exclusion from the center but against the exclusion of the center, its reduction. The 'culture wars' thus arise between those who hold cultural power but fear that it no longer matters and those whose exclusion from that cultural power allows them to believe that such power would matter if only they held it," (114).

By centering itself as a cultural power, the university has sown the seeds of its own destruction at the hands of marketization. Even as this corruption is recognized, it is ideologically maintained by traditional resistors who try to reestablish the prominence of a cultural center and progressives that try to stake their own claim to that cultural center, neither realizing that "[i]n lending primacy to the cultural, critics miss the fact that culture no longer matters to the powers that be in advanced capitalism-whether those powers are transnational corporations or depoliticized, unipolar nation-states," (Readings, 105). Culture, while still important, is no longer the center, the meta-frame of the struggle, but is one of many peripheral tools used to maintain domination.

Though the universalization of the marketplace is hard to see as artificial now, this is when Marx's perspective comes in most handy because he studied capitalism when

it was ascending. Capital is inherently hungry for its own accumulation, driving it into imperialism and colonialism, both outside of the nation and within it. "The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere," (Marx, 212). Just as capital spread across the globe, constantly empowering itself by its imperialism in order to implant a "cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country," (Marx, 212) so does it empower itself by its internal imperialism, colonizing and propagating itself within its own borders. The very dynamism of capitalism demands that capital be restless in its consumption, in what Marx called its "profanation" of life.

Capitalism has eaten away at the university for much of its history, demanding it be both academic and pre-professional, that it both teach the best that has been thought and said and prepare students for particular careers. The culture of ascension model proved a compliment to this, justifying every intrusion as human nature reasserting itself and every failure as both a mistake of the person and a mistake of being uncultured. If they read the classics as they were meant to, as their meanings were transcendentally divined, they would see the liberal ideological core stowed as the truth in all canonized and neutralized texts. But even that had to fall, as capital's obsession with efficiency could never allow for even a jaunt in the unprofitable classics to endure forever. The university survived by maintaining the remnants of high culture, its foundation ever shaking beneath it as commodification infected everything.

The Commodification of the University

The transition in the university has been a gradual but revolutionary change.

Much of the surface level has remained intact, but the foundation of the university has transformed, and, with that, change is spreading throughout its every branch. The cultural justification has been hollowed out and the market rationalization has spread from both the inside and the outside. The new wave of neoliberalism exists both to incite this change and to be the model by which this change is justified. "Proponents of neoliberalism view the market as the natural and inevitable organizing and evaluative force in all social, cultural, and economic matters" (Saunder, 46), so the university too should naturally be evaluated by the ultimate force that is the market.

The market has achieved a sort of perfect ideological framework, ossifying to the point where it seems to be the ultimate frame of human nature, not being a historical occurrence but the end of history, the inevitable point at which humanity must find itself. With this kind of ideological framing, the traditional university and humanities proponents cannot mount a solid critique. Any push on the behalf of culture seems tangential to the market's primacy.

This view of its peripheral nature has been solidified over years of traditional humanities education not being engaged in the conflicting political realities of the world outside of the university. Based on the culture of ascension model, the humanities holed itself up in what transformed from being a peak of culture to an ivory tower, something the "democratization" efforts of the market could easily justify chopping down. Though the culture of ascension model was already ideologically firm, its market replacement faded even more neatly into the assumed background, emptying the culture model of all of its content but retaining its ascending model, merely replacing those complexes of signifiers with the accrual of wealth. Those signifiers still float on with some meaning but

they are not grounded in the way the market is. The market framework simplifies, streamlines, and makes efficient the understanding of ascendence in neoliberal society.

The ideal man has been hewn and streamlined as a vision of a white, male, heteronormative everyman tinged with some nostalgic workingman work ethic, imbued with some conservative but not too conservative values, charged with faith in humanity and the market, common-sensical rather than intellectual, and absolutely loaded with wealth. Ascendence to become this man is no longer based on the development of one's being; after all, one should just rely on common sense. Rather, one grows through a natural progression of maturity wherein one broaches the social world on occasion but ultimately disciplines oneself as an individual with the world and nature set over against one as something to be conquered through market acquisition and exploitation.

Cultural studies merely quickened a process that was inevitable, as shown by the humanities' refusal to politically engage with the world outside its culture of ascension model. Cultural studies revealed that this model was in fact arbitrary and unfair, oppressive and hierarchal. This truth required a vast reimagining of the university, and even as it settled into an all too familiar shape, the illusion of culture as all-important had been shattered.

Capital has the advantage of establishing itself as material reality, as the naturally objective foundation upon which culture is founded. It eventually would have completed its journey up, but cultural studies inadvertently helped it by fracturing culture, though the fault lies largely with the university for not taking this challenge up and revolutionizing itself around it. Neoliberalism is then not an ahistorical disaster brought upon by an singular event but has been a development long fermented and inadequately

resisted:

> "the changes that have occurred due to neoliberalism are not fundamental transformations of the roles and purposes of the university, but instead are substantial accentuations of its previous functions. To say that the development of the neoliberal university and the changes that define it are unique is to both misunderstand the history of higher education in the United States as well as to misplace the source of many functions of higher education. What is new to the neoliberal university is the scope and extent of these profit-driven, corporate ends, as well as how many students, faculty, administrators, and policy makers explicitly support and embrace these capitalistic goals and priorities," (Saunders, 55).

Despite being figuratively and consciously unprecedented, the material historical precedents have long been there for neoliberalism to achieve its dominance. Neoliberalism is not so much a new event as an extension into new territories.

Streamlining the University

Starting with the very subjects that were tacked on to the university, marketization denigrated and derided subjects such as women's studies and African American studies, spreading from there to the rest of the humanities and eventually any subject that didn't directly lead to profit: "[n]eoliberalism, fueled by its unwavering belief in market values and the unyielding logic of corporate profit-making, has little patience with noncommodified knowledge or with the more lofty ideals that have defined higher education as a public service," (Giroux, 265). Culture could no longer be the master narrative because capitalism assumed material reality and ideological reality.

The liberalization of culture that the humanities was complicit with packaged it up into an easily consumable, easily commodifiable form. Withering without political engagement, the humanities could only be commodified by capital. The humanities, with an undeniably powerful push from the rest of the university and market ideology at large, turned a revolutionary potential in cultural studies into its own defeat, allowing its

conception of culture to be fractured and remained broken. It moved and continues to move with the ascending model of culture but few can pretend this cultural inheritance has any universal bearing or material/market relevance.

Student alienation shows that the lessons of the past no longer seem to apply because there is no culture in which to apply them, because the real reality is the marketplace. The Sputnik moment of massive cultural and collegiate federal support was a last gasp of cultural belief, but the humanities did not recognize it as such. The 60s radicalism of cultural reimagining was an opportunity for revolution, for the saving of the humanities from the maw of capital but it was wasted on those that could not bear to lose grip on their ideological inertia. The introduction of a repressed unconscious sub culture into a conscious high culture forced a resolution of this contradiction, but the explosive potential of this realization was instead brought to a bland contiguity, a resolution through cohabitation rather than a revolutionary restructuring.

The high cultural model was merely repeated, persisted only through a stubborn inertia. As with all hierarchies, it could only subsist with the subjugation of the oppressed. With the oppressed in the house, the humanities settled for a compromise rather than a change. It kept all of the fracturing of revolution with none of the creation, enduring the 60s critique and only reacting as absolutely needed. Disguised in neoliberal ideology, the marketplace became situated as the ultimate sociality of mankind, and, with this, all institutions and all life had to fold into its dominance. We were all but individuals unable to fight a systematic strength.

The Continual Crisis In Higher Education

Though little has been done to radically change this situation, there are multitudes

of studies continuously released that evidence the "crisis" in education. For instance, one cites that "[a]bout 1.5 million, or 53.6 percent, of bachelor's degree-holders under the age of 25 last year were jobless or underemployed, the highest share in at least 11 years," (Associated Press). The university must be justified in a neoliberal market situation by its baseline ability (as all things in life) to ensure a job with financial stability and eventual wealth accrual. As it continually and evidently fails to do so, we continually experience the wider capitalistic crisis in a tightened mode around the college passage. In neoliberalism, the crisis, even in a state of panic, is accepted as normal insofar as the system itself cannot be deeply changed. People can accept that society is on the brink of falling apart, but this can only be seen as a reason to dig deeper into the market. The precariousness of the market necessitates that people go to college despite the escalating prices because desperation has become the nature of the worker, a price that has "surged 1,120 percent since records began in 1978," (Jamrisko). To deal with these escalating prices, students must take out massive loans, another perennial issue that is continually recognized but hardly reformed, certainly not changed.

One study revealed that "[s]tudent loan debt is bigger with total outstanding loans exceeded $1 trillion for the first time in 2011 compared to credit card debt in the U.S. which stands at about $798 billion," while the average size of that debt has "jumped since 2005 when the average debt was $17,233. By 2012 the average U.S. student loan debt climbed to $27,253–a 58% increase in just seven years," (Touryalai). This debt breaks students of their freedom at the very moment they are supposed to realize it: "Americans are being conditioned to accept their own exploitation as normal. Ridden with debt from the minute they graduate college, they compete for the privilege of working without pay.

They no longer earn money - they earn the prospect of making money," (Kendzior). Students compete with each other to achieve this slim prospect, all because of the alienated goal of surviving in a capitalist society. The very idea of the American Dream is dying for students, the fuel for this ideological narrative relying on the correlation of new generations improving on their predecessors. At this point, students quite clearly face a future that is bleaker than the ones their parents encountered. Their society and their culture is not flourishing, so neither will they.

The humanity that is represented to them in maturity and adulthood is not a politically engaged social being but is rather a stunted, economic agent capable only of competition and alienated loneliness as "[c]itizenship is portrayed as an utterly solitary affair whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain," (Giroux, 252). Self worth itself is reduced to what one can produce. To have self worth is to have market worth.

College becomes the eye of a natural storm, the responsibility to survive from it being placed on the students and the schools. The cultural ascension form that neoliberalism appropriated was replaced with the university's new mission of economic rather than cultural initiation. Students were not to be educated but to be trained, not to live but to survive, not to flourish in the future but languish in the present and recover from a debt-ridden past. Even in market reality this is harmful, because students prepare not for the unseen jobs of the future but for the ever changing, ever disappearing jobs of the present. They train for positions that disappear, and the United States becomes an economic follower rather than leader. Without a vision to appropriate, capitalism's own dynamism devours itself.

The Denial of History

Again, despite draining traditional culture of its content signifiers, market capitalism still retained its ideological model, including the ascending motion and the interpellation into a power hierarchy. Though this crisis constriction damages most people, it especially damages those of sub cultures. People are never evenly interpellated into society because there is a structural history always perpetuating itself from the past into the present, a historical power relation that market ideology denies. In a neoliberal worldview, the idea that society at large could control or limit what was supposed to be the ultimate power of the individual must be illusory, must be denied and erased. Further, the idea that structural conditions could persist after their overt reformation is absolutely inconceivable. Even a modern democratic society based on equal participation in the market cannot produce equality because it applies equal standards to unequal conditions, conditions that it ignores.

There are different kinds and forms of hierarchy throughout the world and throughout time, but, in America in particular, there is a specifically powerful discrimination history against black people and other people of color. I wouldn't be breaking any historical ground by claiming that slavery was a horrific institution that still has lasting effects, but even this seemingly elementary realization can still break ideological ground. It's an idea that at a distance makes sense, but once brought into close reality comes into conflict with neoliberal ideology, and the latter usually overcomes it.

Most will accept that slavery would have a devastating effect on someone and their family, but to extend that to understanding how this might still be affecting a modern black family in poverty becomes dubitable. This is assisted by the neoliberal

conception of the individual that delimits strict boundaries for memory, dictating that the individual's is the only significant item. With this in mind, the Civil Rights movements, only taking place decades ago, are relegated to history textbooks despite there being people currently alive to remember it. Slavery too has become a distant memory despite it having only been abolished a few lifetimes ago (assuming something like 70 years a piece). Further, it eliminates the possibility of seeing modern day slavery in the forms of sex trafficking, outsourced labor, and wage slavery. Neoliberal history commodifies the conception of slavery and absorbs it into the past, isolating it as something only to be remembered. The neoliberal conception of history brackets off any conception of collective history, limiting and restricting history to individual events.

History can only be seen as a series of discrete events rather than as something that can accumulate and solidify not through people as individuals but through groups as systems. Something like slavery then merely becomes a terrible event as people ignore the fact that "[t]he subsequent institutionalization of these relationships for the continued acquisition of material wealth serves to reproduce the current impoverishment of large segments of communities of color," (Zamudio, 17-18). Slavery becomes something of a historical event rather than a historical institution, the latter of which being understood as having lasting and systematic effects.

Instead, people of all histories are expected to rise to equal standards despite unequal historical conditions. Dominant conservatives and proponents of neoliberalism point to individual reforms as signs that institutional problems have been solved, unable to conceptualize history in a relational sense. The very way neoliberal ideology configures the conceptualization of history fragments it into a series of discrete events

that can be solved and forgotten in a linear fashion: "[u]ltimately, the liberal perspective fails to consider the multiple power relationships that give some individuals much greater advantage over others, and that allow some people to be freer than others," (Zamudio, 16). Without a more complex understanding of the relational workings of humanity and the way history is both generated by these relations and determines its people by those relations, history becomes oversimplified. Without a relational understanding, we are left with an individualistic understanding, one that is generated by neoliberal ideology, reinforced by it, and made to support it. "Liberal societies use the slogans of equality to benefit an exclusive, privileged group. And while over the years liberal societies have extended legal and political rights to a greater number of people, they have never addressed the fundamental material inequality passed down through generations of modern capitalist development. From the very beginning, then, the ideal of equality in the abstract has been celebrated within a broader context of concrete inequality," (Zamudio, 16). The liberal rhetoric of equality is then little more than an ideological disguise masking a material, social, and cultural inequality.

Further, as critical race theorists and feminist theorists continually uncover, even the individual reforms that are made in favor of oppressed groups generally do not come from a radically empathetic society. Instead, the dominant vision of the present society becomes primary over the past reality. Specifically, the dominant group still has primary control and regard in what reforms occur. For instance, many of the civil rights reforms finally succeeded because dominant white society wanted to appear more democratic in the face of the Soviets: "the landmark ruling in Brown was made possible through the convergence of foreign policy interests with the interests of people of color in securing

civil rights," (Zamudio, 35). Of course, this does not at all devalue the work of civil rights leaders but does show that even when the dominant group works with an oppressed one, they must find a way it benefits them to be able to justify it.

An analogous situation occurred in education with the institution of such policies as affirmative action and other diversity-based reforms. They are justified by the dominant group not based on genuine care but by how it benefits them: "the affirmation of diversity was held to be of value but only with the convergence of white interests and only when students of color had to bear the responsibility for creating that diversity," (Zamudio, 36). For diversity, this is usually done through the idea that a more diverse student population will make a better environment for students already there by bringing in new perspectives.

Behind the scenes, diversity is also justified by some supposed need for political correctness, as if the inclusion of an oppressed group in higher education were simply some toll one had to pay to be considered polite and well mannered. This is confirmed as people now pressure such reforms to be excised before they even came terribly close to healing a much deeper problem. Dominant groups now get upset as if it is unfair for oppressed students to be given a favorable glance; they do not even begin to conceptualize the very idea of structural consequences.

Fairness, at least on a historical level, is not something people in such dominant and privileged positions are equipped to fully understand (the author included). They do not realize that "Civil rights policy removed the most blatant legal institutional barriers to equal schooling, but failed to address the multitude of other existing social inequalities created after almost 500 years of racialized exploitation. Students of color are allowed to

enter the classroom but never on an equal footing," (Zamudio, 18). This inequality is not only perpetuated by the school; institutions throughout force oppressed student to articulate themselves through language of oppression. Individuals within these institutions, however, deny conscious racism and believe this means racism itself has ended. Neoiberals only understand things in terms of intentionality, but racism persists through institutions, through past intentions sedimented into collective human inertia.

Because of this linear ideology and lack of structural understand, there are now efforts to eliminate these reforms before they even get deep enough to make a substantive change. From an entrenched neoliberal perspective, the problems have been solved, and any further issues must be the fault of the students themselves: "[t]he failure of students to achieve given these extra opportunities must then be rooted in the deficiencies of the students, their families and culture(s) rather than in the educational institutions. In reality, much of the major educational reforms have worked to open access to schools but have not focused on the quality of education once minority students pass through the schoolhouse door," (Zamudio, 17). Now that changes have been made, neoliberal ideology is comfortable blaming these oppressed groups, because they see the conditions as having been equalized when they are far from actually being so. They only see the theory of equality rather than the reality, the practice: "[p]olitical equality, such as voting rights, in the abstract does not translate into equality in the concrete social world," (Zamudio, 19).

We can see this from such traditional conservatives as Allan Bloom, who claims “kids just do not have prejudices against anyone. Whether this is because man has been reduced to a naked animal without any of the trappings of civilization that differentiate

him, or because we have recognized our essential humankindness, is a matter of interpretation. But the fact is that everyone is an individual—if not very individual —in our major universities. They are all just persons. Being human is enough for what is important. It does not occur to students to think that any of the things that classically divided people, even in egalitarian America, should keep them away from anyone else," (89). This is a classic neoliberal perspective and one that many hold, especially as neoliberal ideology solidifies. If one sees humanity as merely a series of persons and fails to see interpersonal prejudice, it is easy to assume racism and sexism no longer exist. If the only available way to relate to another person is between an isolated individual and another isolated individual, racism can all but disappear after such overt policies as segregation and Jim Crow laws are destroyed. This fragmentation aids an order that is maintained by the ignorance of its own consequences: "[t]he very notion that race no longer matters is part of an ideology that justifies and legitimates racial inequality in society. Subtle beliefs about racial superiority and inferiority serve to elevate the traditions, art, languages, literature, and ways of being and knowing of some groups while disparaging the contributions of others. We learn to value the Western literary canon and a Eurocentric curriculum as superior to the traditions developed by oppressed groups," (Zamudio, 3).

In modern society, racism and other systems of oppression have become both highly visible and completely invisible. They are continually argued about, and anyone would step back from implicating themselves in their perpetuation, but the structures still persist through less visible, more sophisticated means. People of color are now jailed not for the color of their skin but because they “looked suspicious.” Feminists are denounced

not for being women but for being “emotional.” And always, it is “people” that commit violent and hate based crimes, with the recurrent white male identity now being submerged in neutral wordings. Language itself is depoliticized, with obscurity subsuming people in neoliberal ideology as structures of oppression continue in the background.

Racism in terms of interpersonal prejudice has been ousted from the unconscious, brought into the daylight and rightfully denounced. Bill Readings points out that as this simplified version is critiqued, "[l]iberal academics denounce the ideology of race and gender from a position in which it becomes possible to see such representations as ideological, without pausing to think that if the ideological has become visible, it is because the high-stakes game has moved to another table," (104). If the interpersonal ideologies within racism have moved into a place of being visible and mendable, then they are not truly ideologies anymore. That said, they can still be incredibly pernicious, and the progress already done to see them and fix them has been worthwhile. Still, if radical progress is to be achieved, one must continue to question ideology, and, as Readings suggests, this framework has shifted back another step into the background, ever seeming natural and objective.

Structural Oppression

Pierre Bourdieu analyzes the topic of ritualistic progression in a way that can show one of the most important structural ideologies of racism, sexism, and other oppressions. It is worthwhile to quote him at length:

> “To speak of rites of institution is to suggest that all rites tend to consecrate or legitimate an arbitrary boundary, by fostering a misrecognition of the arbitrary nature of the limit and encouraging a recognition of it as legitimate [...] By solemnly marking the passage over a line which establishes a fundamental

> division in the social order, rites draw the attention of the observer to the passage [...] whereas the important thing is the line. What, in effect, does this line separate? Obviously, it separates a before and an after [...] In fact, the most important division, and one which passes unnoticed, is the vision it creates between those who are not subject to it... There is thus a hidden set of individuals in relation to which the instituted group is defined," (118).

The ritual around the college graduation itself focuses attention on the dividing line between those who graduate and those who don't, those who get in to college and those who don't, and for him specifically, those who pass the ritual and those who don't. The more sacred the ritual, in terms of diploma transference or embossed acceptance letters, the more attention becomes localized to this dividing line between successes and failures (and always in neoliberal ideology, the failures are blamed entirely for what is seen as their own mistakes). The sanctity of this ritual passage serves to distract from the marginalized and silenced groups of people that are quietly disqualified from the ritual entirely.

In higher education, this includes students who through luck of geography end up in poorly run and poorly funded high schools that don't support them enough to make them college eligible, students without stable family structures to support their academics, students who must work most of their lives to support their families, students who have been informed from birth by cultural and personal narratives that they cannot go to college or cannot pursue certain subjects because of their race or gender, and, in general, students that have been interpellated into oppressive hierarchal systems that structurally eliminate their ability to pursue higher education. Neoliberals cleverly focus on the rare students that transcend these massive odds, but they are always exceptions to the rule. In the ideological mode of ascendance, the ritual of ascendance becomes the center of public attention while the structural elimination is marginalized.

The disqualified group is made invisible by only acknowledging those who have "failed" to pass the line. In this way, graduates are always defined against people who do not graduate and good students are always defined against bad students, both oppressive situations that serve to mask the still more oppressed people that are disqualified from this process entirely. The rites and ceremony around this passage are especially important because they create a process wherein "[t]o institute, in this case, is to consecrate, that is, to sanction and sanctify a particular state of things, an established order [which] consists of sanctioning and sanctifying a different (pre-existent or not) by making it *known* and *recognized*; it consists of making it exist as a social difference, known and recognized as such by the agent invested and everyone else,"(Bourdieu, 199). The rite of graduation and the structure of education create the social conditions for the reception of certain unequally treated peoples and subsequently makes certain people within its systems cast in a role that makes them socially recognizable as having passed. The structure of education itself has become permeated with the institutions of oppressions that have long defined society so that even if we include liberal reforms, they merely change the surface rather than radically change the root.

Unequal Educational Policies

Such reforms are revealed to be especially weak when we consider what some writers worry will become a deeper educational inequality wherein the best schools become entirely for a higher class of people and worse schools are left to rot in underfunding for the rest. Just as wealth distribution has deeply diverged in the wider economic situation, so has wealth diverged in higher education, with the best schools hoarding wealth and maintaining their exclusivity through high tuitions, while worse

schools are given less funding to support the students that need it the most. Education in general, from college down to primary school, has been infected with the structural funding ideology of achievement.

No Child Left Behind, instituted during the Bush administration, may be the most well known initiation, all bearing the common and most dangerous mark of achievement based funding wherein “good schools” are rewarded with funding and “bad schools” are punished with defunding. This creates a widening disparity wherein poor schools, already underfunded with their revenue being based on the property taxes of their districts, which, to no fault of the students, may be poor: "so once again the advantaged would be competing with the disadvantaged, with almost certainly predictable results. Such mass testing would not alleviate the real crisis in US education, but the results could be used to justify differences in achievement of both children and schools, by imposing ideals of competition and hierarchy while accepting and exacerbating a divided and unequal society," (Weiler, 217).

Even institutions like colleges are neoliberalized as individuals, as personifications that fail based entirely on their own effort. The system gathers inertia as people fail to adequately challenge it because the "high achieving schools have little reason to challenge a system that benefits them, and the low achieving schools have few resources to change a system that does not benefit them," (Zamudio, 34). Structural inequality, disguised as achievement and measured through illusorily objective standardized tests, then produces more structural inequality. As Zamudio further points out, the “emphasis on standardized tests above all other types of learning damages the intellectual potential of all students. By privileging and accepting only one way of

knowing, it devalues the funds of knowledge that students of color bring with them to their educational experience," (40). Continually, a certain type of knowledge is tested and rewarded with the distribution of teaching capable of handling this testing unevenly placed.

For instance, the SATs have long been representative of a gender bias that rectified a supposed error in gender difference to support males:

> "[F]or the first several years the SAT was offered, males scored higher than females on the Math section but females achieved higher scores on the Verbal section. ETS policy-makers determined that the Verbal test needed to be 'balanced' more in favor of males, and added questions pertaining to politics, business and sports to the Verbal portion. Since that time, males have outscored females on both the Math and Verbal sections. Dwyer notes that no similar effort has been made to 'balance' the Math section, and concludes that, 'It could be done, but it has not been, and I believe that probably an unconscious form of sexism underlies this pattern. When females show the superior performance, 'balancing' is required; when males show the superior performance, no adjustments are necessary,'" (fairtest).

Even as tests are supposedly standardized, certain societal norms, in this case gender, are taken into consideration. A certain vision of society, always seen as being the true, right, and natural one, is to be supported.

With the outer economic crisis and the significantly worse educational one, tight funds mean that even schools opposed to such testing must shift all of their teaching to the test in order to get enough money to even have a chance at succeeding. At all points, this hurts already structurally disadvantaged people, so even as acts like affirmative action become devalued in neoliberal culture, an accurate material perspective is not taken. Though enrollment is up, this enrollment has become stratified to different types and qualities of schooling. As Henry Giroux says

> "when business concerns about efficiency and cost-effectiveness replace the imperatives of critical learning, a division based on social class begins to appear.

> Poor and marginalized students will get low-cost, low-skilled knowledge and second-rate degrees from online sources, while those students being educated for leadership positions in the elite schools will get personalized instruction and socially interactive pedagogies in which high-powered knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving will be a priority (coupled with a high-status degree). Under such circumstances, traditional modes of class and racial tracking will be reinforced and updated," (268).

New divisions emerge among old fault lines with neoliberal ideology ready to blame the individual rather than itself as a structure. Poor and marginalized students from minority races and genders are then re-segregated in disguised form, as they are filtered into poorly funded schools with overworked staff. They become what Gayatri Spivak has legendarily termed, the “subaltern,” “those removed from lines of social mobility," (531). Rather than opening up these disadvantaged situations to well-meaning professors however, efficiency minded administrators further cement this divide by focusing on the hiring of temporary staff, namely adjunct professors. Aronowitz explains: "[a] college can hire five to eight adjuncts for every junior faculty position and typically does not pay them benefits unless they have some form of union rights," (74). These professors are paid poorly, are deeply overworked, and their own precarious position reflects those of the students they teach, making the relationship between them a treacherous one to maintain.

Of course, administrators cannot be dealt all of the blame because they are being handed a financial situation unequally unfair in the history of the university. In this era of neoliberalism, all public institutions are viewed with a suspicion and all have been receiving massive cuts. “Financial support for universities has veered dramatically from public to private contributions, consistent with the general pressure to diminish government funding for a wide range of public programs and to predicate support for

most any social program—any social good, more broadly—on private preferences, whether individual or corporate. [...] All universities, public and private, have become major fundraisers, dependent increasingly on private giving, non-state revenue streams (including steady fee increases), and the interests of private and privatizing determination," (Goldberg). The university does not become increasingly corporatized purely by the conspiracy of internal agents but by material encouragement from outside market forces. When it comes down to it, the university has lost a vast amount of funding and in this desperate context; more and more administrators are brought on in an effort to more quickly bail the water out of this sinking ship. The effort is certainly counterproductive to some degree, but it at least makes more market sense than hiring more tenure track humanities professors. The market is not merely an ideology but is also a reality, a reality that universities must increasingly respond to with deference.

Marketization, like other damaging historical political changes, moves upward, so traditionally cheaper institutions have generally been corroded first with the changes racing up to the more elite universities. It is worth noting that the issue has also risen in public attention only when it has begun to touch these more prestigious institutions, perhaps implying that a loss of the "lower" schools would have been sustainable and worthy of ignorance. Changes such as these can always be justified on the marginalized first, allowing the establishment of a new norm that can then take over the "higher" planes. Giroux warns that this now totalizing effort for marketization will especially harm such schools already in precarious positions: "corporatizing the university will take its biggest toll on those second- and third-tier institutions that are increasingly defined as serving no other function than to train semi-skilled and obedient workers for the new

postindustrial order. The role slotted for these institutions is driven less by the imperatives of the new digital technologies than by the need to reproduce a gender, racial, and class division of labor that supports the neoliberal global market revolution and its relentless search for bigger profits," (268). Though culture may have already been devoured to a great extent in this vast marketization, it can still be used as a tool to divide people against each other. It can still be an already well-worn channel, a repeated narrative along which changes can be slid in more easily.

Transcendence Through STEM

In the face of wide economic turmoil however, these silenced groups can suddenly gain some purchase in neoliberal ideology as they are offered a savior in the form of economic work. While scholarships in the arts, humanities, and other "useless" degrees will be hard to come by, oppressed groups will be homogeneously encouraged to take up careers in subjects that will boost the economy. Again in neoliberal ideology, people are not recognized as people until they are first economic actors.

A new series of reforms has recently occurred as schools rush to get women and other minority groups involved in STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) fields. Though past reforms have always suffered from the above problems of shallowness as well, these new ones are sharpened by the edge of a new focus on STEM education. STEM has become the new focal point of educational development, and through it, neoliberals can justify and claim it as the savior of so many underrepresented groups.

There are constantly myths circulated of inner city kids finding transcendence through engineering, of women defying their gender roles through coding, but these

myths barely even cover the fact that these fields within and without education still have not been changed to welcome such minority groups, despite the supposed focus on STEM. It is implicitly assumed that such groups have not joined these economies because of their own faults and that they merely require encouragement to do so. It is ideologically ignored that the very structure of these economies and groups have systematically disallowed and disqualified such groups from participating in these economies despite interest. Further, as we discussed in the section on sub culture, sub cultural groups cannot merely be included within a dominant group without the radical restructuring of that group and their very definition of what constitutes that group. Dominant people within such groups then become highly resistant to such "intrusions," often insulating themselves by poisoning their own environment with vitriolic discourses and practices that make participating in such a group painful to the point of being impossible.

Opposite to this, oppressed groups often try to coalesce into collections of solidarity in subjects such as Women's Studies and African American Studies, but these subjects are denigrated. These students are seen as congregating to isolate themselves within their own studies, while white male students never receive this judgment because their congregation in white centered studies is treated as normal. In all manners of racism, sexism, and heteronormativity, the prototypical person is treated as white, male, and heterosexual. Any deviations from that produce a socially recognizable difference. Racism and sexism are subsumed into states of normalcy and any resistance, even passively, is seen as tangential specialization, as isolationism, as self-centeredness. We can see this in an example accusation from Allan Bloom: "[t]he way was opened for

black students to live and study the black experience, to be comfortable, rather than be constrained by the learning accessible to man as man," (95). The system sets things up to benefit a certain kind of people and either breaks people into those roles or fails people who don't. A particular standard is treated as transcendentally universal and any deviations from the norm are treated as insubstantial.

For neoliberalism, such issues are ignored because STEM does not take its worth from its use value but from its exchange value. It is often disguised as being a set of more useful disciplines, but the definition of use is socially defined and in a capitalist context, "use" means how much surplus value it can produce. STEM is then valued so highly because it is one in a line of educational subjects that are treated as profitable. In marketized education, knowledge becomes merely a commodity, and with this, knowledge becomes subject primarily to exchange value. That knowledge which can be exchanged into the market, invested for surplus and eventual profit is legitimated as the best knowledge, as valuable knowledge. "Knowledge with a high market value is what counts, while those fields, such as the fine arts and humanities, that cannot be quantified in such terms will either be downsized or allowed to become largely irrelevant in the hierarchy of academic knowledge," (Giroux, 264). With the ascendance of profit replacing the ascendance of culture, the humanities is seen as tangential and ripe for elimination.

Appropriating Positivism

STEM has some extra power because it commodifies a bygone cultural power from the philosophical worldview of positivism. This vision of the world limited value to what it saw as scientific, i.e. things that could be rigorously and meticulously studied

with constant reference to supposedly material, objective, and physical facts. A classic diagram from positivism is one that makes a hierarchy of knowledge based on a foundation of math, which is seen as the cell of purest objectivity. True facts can only be built upon that in linear form from math to physics to chemistry to biology to psychology. Each step up gets shakier and is viewed with more skepticism, especially if it cannot trace clear reference down the ladder to an origin in mathematics. Interestingly, this is sustained even as mathematicians such as Gödel prove that even a basic mathematical system like arithmetic cannot be upheld axiomatically, in other words, cannot be autonomous. The base treated as absolute still needs some assumptions, which are of course socially constrained and constituted.

Though it is not admitted, this hierarchy is sustained by the ideological view that delimits positivism, essentially the view that reason is the ultimate tool and standard of life. This receives some inheritance from Cartesian dualism and other dualistic views that treated the mind (as rational) and the body (as physical and emotional) as two fundamentally different and separate things. This division is usually upheld in order to privilege the powers of mind over the tangential distractions of bodily desires and emotional distractions. This in itself can do quite a bit of damage to the humanities, which largely deals with the emotional and the bodily through such lenses as literature and theater, but it is amplified by positivism which then extends this discourse by privileging such subjects as science above others, not only by valuing it more highly but by treating it as legitimate.

This edge is sharpest when it comes into contact with certain minority groups who don't have the privilege of denying their bodies. bell hooks shows this as she reflects on

how multicultural education has disquieted this positivist dualistic habit: "I think that one of the unspoken discomforts surrounding the way a discourse of race and gender, class and sexual practice has disrupted the academy is precisely the challenge to that mind/body split. Once we start talking in the classroom about the body and about how ·we live in our bodies, we're automatically challenging the way power has orchestrated itself in that particular institutionalized space. The person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body," (136-7). For women accustomed to being harassed or abused based on the gendering of their bodies or persons-of-color being systemically disadvantaged based on the color of their skin, the body is not something capable of being denied.

Bodies have an important place in the constitution of the social hierarchy, but only those at the top have the privilege of pretending they don't. "The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral, objective facts, facts that are not particular to who is sharing the information. We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies," (hooks, 139). The erasure of the body is then an essential part of pretending knowledge to be neutral and objective. "To call attention to the body is to betray the legacy of repression and denial that has been handed down to us by our professorial elders, who have been usually white and male," (hooks, 191) a betrayal that is feared, blocked by the delegitimizing efforts of positivism, dualism, and enlightenment. These groups are further denigrated as reason is prioritized so that it essentially defines humanity: "[s]ince reason is the essential faculty that distinguishes humans from animals, it is also identified [...] as the higher, superior property of humans, as a life distinguished by activities of reason is a superior life," (Ferguson, 61). White

men are esteemed as the most rational, so the emotional women and the angry people of color are delegitimized.

Positivism is not just some philosophy snapped up by convenience either. It has its origins in the fountain of enlightenment thought, the place where liberalism itself was largely conceived and perpetuated. Enlightenment, even before positivism, sought to use rigorous reason to dissect reality and through that, understand it. "Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity. Enlightenment's program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge," (Horkheimer, 1). Already, we can see how such a movement would be ripe for ideological entrapment by thinking that it can clear a scientific path straight through an inevitable interpellation. In education, we can see how the attempt to dispel fantasy could be used to dispel anything that was seen as dealing with fantasy, such as education in the humanities. After all, "[f]or enlightenment, anything which docs not conform to the standard of calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion," (Horkheimer, 3). Again, it's clear how such a movement could align perfectly with the neoliberal marketization of society.

Ultimately, positivism does exactly what it says it doesn't: it makes an aesthetic value paramount. What is important for positivism and other fundamentalist adherents to reason is less the strict system they seem to maintain than the cold, slick, seemingly objective appearance of reason. This appearance is maintained by a cleansing of subjectivity through the body and the emotions, thus flushing anything out that uses those

domains. Positivism continually defines itself by the negation of humanity, seeing subjectivity merely as a source of bias. With objectivity inherently being something that cannot be achieved by the very nature of social historical interpellation, positivists seek exactly what they profess to avoid, the aesthetic feeling of something being rational. Disguised within this supposedly objective judgment is the fact that the “notion of objectivity in any field reflects the values and assumptions of the scholars working in that field. In the name of objectivity these values and assumptions are hidden. It is impossible to separate values from facts and inquiry from ethics," (Kincheloe, 12). Far from being neutral and objective, positivism is tied up in a particular vision and any subjects taking part in this vision are far from being neutral as well.

As positivist enlightenment is subsumed into neoliberal marketization, that faith in mathematics is culturally transmuted into a faith in equivalence: "[b]ourgeois society is ruled by equivalence. It makes dissimilar things comparable by reducing them to abstract quantities. For the Enlightenment, anything which cannot be resolved into numbers, and ultimately into one, is illusion; modern positivism consigns it to poetry. Unity remains the watchword from Parmenides to Russell. All gods and qualities must be destroyed," (Horkheimer, 4). In *Capital*, Marx showed how capitalism inherently exploits labor to produce not in terms of use value but in terms of equivalent value so that one product can be transformed through the exploitation of labor power into a different product of greater equivalent value, thus making surplus and profit. Horkheimer echoes this by extending this vast equivalence from the economy into culture and into all of life. Enlightenment positivism and marketized capital then meet in a space where they both reduce all reality into abstract numbers. Marketization commodifies for the purpose of surplus value

production, while positivism justifies on this path of destruction while delegitimizing anything that cannot be thus subsumed.

In this context, STEM inherits this ideological structure and benefits from its institutionalization. Continually, STEM outreach programs are made to capture students as young as primary school with a fascination for engineering, while, on the other side, humanities programs that have little authentic critical presence before college are getting cuts across the board, often being eliminated entirely. Of course, this is nothing against engineering and the STEM fields themselves. Their content is actually incredibly important and absolutely worthwhile for human development. What is ideological and thus damaging about STEM is not science nor technology nor engineering nor math but the acronym, i.e. the idea that these must be grouped together and lorded as the objectively most valuable part of education. It is not valuable because of what it is but because of what it can be made to do. Engineering can absolutely be progressive, but it is one of the easiest fields, thanks to positivism and industrial work narratives, to neutralize and commodify. Its falling in the "scientific" category versus the "artistic" category is arbitrary; the motivation to make it the most valuable is ideological. By being closer to the market in proximity, it is easier for it to be swallowed into the hole of marketization entirely.

As said before, oppressed people who would normally get ignored actually get attention because of this focus on STEM. When STEM is marketized and valued this highly, we create a new crisis by arguing there are not enough students to fill these roles and thus not enough workers to hold up the economy. We only reach down to help the oppressed when we can offer them a role that benefits the dominant group. They are not

acknowledged as people but as potential economic actors. We do not reach for them as humans but as a labor pool in waiting. What initially seems progressive is then deeply regressive, commodifying potentially radical sub cultures into market compliant workers.

We see this reflected upwards by some feminists who, rather than critique masculinity and patriarchal dominance, actually blame women for not being masculine enough (which is coded as "assertive" or “competitive"). Similarly, movements of sex positivity have lost control of responsible positivity and have degenerated into performing the male gaze with pride rather than learning independent self-love. In both case, feminism, which is certainly a historically radical movement, has strains wherein what is outwardly progressive becomes implicitly regressive. Both strains fight for ultimately affirmative stances, one for women staking their claims in the world of dominant CEOs and the other choosing to join abusive sexuality rather than fight it. Progressive movements can then be commodified by the grafting of conservative ideologies that seem to putatively change culture but materially affirm society. This is prime evidence that the struggle has moved beyond culture. Cultural arguments can always be commodified because capital now permeates everything. Though we want young girls to be able to think of themselves as engineers for sure, we need to be critical of the fact that the dominant order is only allowing this small act of progressivism because it can be commodified for the market order by way of positivism and similar ideologies.

In this way, capitalism then gets the advantage of a well-chosen, historically entrenched narrative that can assist it as it delegitimizes and destroys any institution with

even the potential of questioning capitalism. This is not to say that positivism and the Enlightenment are purely evil, but, when neutralized into capitalism, it provided a seemingly cultural justification for capitalism's brutality. Positivism, by way of its methodologies of masculine purification in which it tries to cleanse itself of bias and emotion, fits perfectly with similar narratives of the ideal liberal individual. Positivism is already quite close to marketization because it already sets itself up as masculine (by negating emotion) and individualist (by denying determination as bias). Yet as capitalism develops, even as positivism paves this way for marketization, it becomes less and less necessary as capitalism founds its own self-justificatory common sense. Market ideology always demands a continual improvement and streamlining in efficiency, so, even as it gains dominance, it must cut out extraneous justification until reality is replaced with the market, until reality can justify itself.

A Market Language

Marketized universities, with the inevitable decay of positivism, have invented their own language to replace it. Bill Readings has a particular bone to pick with the term "excellence," a popular meme turned metric that is used to measure the quality of anything in the university. Many have picked it up in their mottos and many more have propagated it throughout their curriculums, grants, and reforms. The problem with such a term though, is that it is an “integrating principle, excellence has the singular advantage of being entirely meaningless, or to put it more precisely, non-referential," (Readings, 22). Without getting into the details of language philosophy and reference, we can at least stake the claim that the term is at best highly malleable and at worst, completely meaningless. Either way, it becomes something to manipulate. Without reference,

excellence cannot demand a strict meaning so its meaning is then up to market forces. It is not used objectively, as is claimed, but changes with the market: "[e]xcellence is clearly a purely internal unit of value that effectively brackets all questions of reference or function, thus creating an internal market. Henceforth, the question of the University is only the question of relative value-for-money, the question posed to a student who is situated entirely as a consumer, rather than as someone who wants to think," (Readings, 27). In a market context, “excellence” can only refer to exchange value and surplus profit, but the word as an internal market brackets questions that would obstruct such a marketization. Excellence is then another term in the process neutralizing language into pure market ideology, only a small step from reducing everything to absolute market terms.

“Excellence” then functions with a great deal of subjectivity disguised as objectivity, as if people and institutions can be adequately judged based on how "excellent" they are. But "to say that excellence is a criterion is to say absolutely nothing other than that the committee will not reveal the criteria used to judge applications," (Readings, 24). Excellence disguises the dominance of market concerns and more nefariously obscures any other concerns that may be in the administrator's mind. Despite being pushed through on the glint of positivism, such a system is ripe for misuse and bias but it still retains a cloak of objectivity. "In this context, excellence responds very well to the needs of technological capitalism in the production and processing of information, in that it allows for the increasing integration of all activities into a generalized market," (Readings, 32). By way of excellence as ideological structure, anything and everything can be subsumed into the market.

Most damningly, Readings claims that "[e]xcellence draws only one boundary: the boundary that protects the unrestricted power of the bureaucracy. And if a particular department's kind of excellence fails to conform, then that department can be eliminated without apparent risk to the system," (Readings, 33). With excellence as a tool and the general need for efficiency and the infection of market values, bureaucracy has gained power over the university. Administrators have always been a need, but formerly educational institutions have become administrative ones if one is to look at who is hired, what kind of position is cut least, and who gets the biggest pay check (the ultimate value signifier in capitalism). "I would be inclined to argue that the University of Excellence is one in which a general principle of administration replaces the dialectic of teaching and research, so that teaching and research, as aspects of professional life, are subsumed under administration," (Readings, 125). The administrator then becomes the ideological resolution of a necessary dialectic, smoothing over the contradiction in order to subordinate it to a market hierarchy.

Administrators have taken a position akin to the managers of factories, using scientific management and assembly line logic to encourage and induce efficiency, ultimately justifying themselves with the need for excellence. When a university needs something, another administrator needs to be hired and when the university is doing well, another administrator needs to be hired to handle the extra money. Continually, excellence only draws a distinct line in favor of bureaucratic progress. According to Debra Scott, in 2012, “administrators [outnumbered] faculty on every campus across the country.”

For humanities education, this becomes especially dangerous because this influx

of administrators can only see the humanities as a waste of money. They do not produce money but only suck it away. They are only a liability. The university, as a newly consecrated corporate business, only invests in what makes surplus value. This is why sports arenas are continually remodeled and campus roads can fall into disrepair. The pecking order is dominantly decided by return on investment so adjunct salaries, roads, and humanities education all go underfunded if they're lucky. Most likely, they will be outright cut or starved of funds until they necessarily fail. As per usual, it's the failure's fault, not anyone else's. As Readings goes on to say: "[s]ince this process is designed to introduce a competitive market into the academic world, investment follows success, so the government intervenes to accentuate differentials in perceived quality rather than to reduce them. Thus more money is given to the high-scoring university departments, while the poor ones, rather than being developed, are starved of cash (under the Thatcher regime, this was of course understood as an encouragement to such departments to pull themselves up by their bootstraps). The long-term trend is to permit the concentration of resources in centers of high performance and to encourage the disappearance of departments, and even perhaps of universities, perceived as 'weaker,'" (36). Of course, the non-referential item of "excellence" is the ultimate and final metric for funding and survival. Use value is entirely ignored in favor of exchange value.

The University as Global Commodity

Readings then spells a future that is already upon us, one wherein such notions of excellence help the university link up to a globalized corporate structure, the final step the university needs to achieve complete corporatization. "The University will produce excellence in knowledges, and as such will link into the circuits of global capital and

transnational politics without difficulty. This is because there is no cultural content to the notion of excellence, nothing specifically "French," for example, except insofar as "Frenchness" is a commodity on the global market," (Readings, 38). Without assuming national culture is inherently valuable, it would be a blockade to leveling such ancient cultural institutions to the level of global businesses, but as discussed before, this process is already largely completed. Further, the very capability of universities to engage in such a wide market is proof that such cultural foundations have already been dismantled.

We can see this process occurring alongside the spreading of Internet-based education, wherein anything specific to professor and community is eliminated. Online education is justified by its cheap price tag, a material encouragement that most do not have the privilege to ignore. As always, capitalism creates the grounds that determine its success and with such empty metrics in tow, "the only criterion of excellence is performativity in an expanded market," (Readings, 38). Importantly, though such an ideology certainly affects content, it is not content in itself. Its very nature as a structure for transmitting content is what crafts it as an ideology. By nature, this structure cannot be neutral: "[k]nowledge is a system in which the 'contents' cannot be conceived outside their forms of appropriation (acquisition, transmission, control, utilization). The system is that of the ideological dominance of a class," (Ranciére, 6). The narrative, the structure, and the ideology of marketization dictates knowledge as objective, disguising the fact that it cannot be appropriated without the indelible mark of its transmission, control, and utilization, all ossified as market ideology.

One thing we must continually resist in such analyses is the temptation to over personify institutions such as capitalism; such vapidity results in little more than

conspiracy theories. This extended discussion of marketization is then in fact not a superstructural implementation from nefarious illuminati but is generated by (and generates) material conditions. This marketized education is not a new invention but is a revitalized inheritance from industrial era education. As capitalism and the industrial revolution first started their ascendent profanation of society, education was fitted to new circumstances. When life was secularized and profaned by the profusion of capital, education had to be modified to fit these new circumstances.

Althusser discusses how educational institutions are retrofitted to become ideological apparatuses because the state of production necessarily requires a continuous state of reproduction. Similarly, we cannot merely teach students the market but must marketize students: "the reproduction of labor-power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order" (Althusser, 103). As Benjamin says, "[m]ass reproduction is aided especially by the reproduction of masses," (251). In industrial era education and our inheritance of it, this means that scientific management on the industrial line is translated into discipline in the classroom. Students are regimented into strict course loads with exact timings and ruler snapping order. The dominant form of knowledge is one of "know how" rather than "know why" (Althusser, 103). Specifically, the students must know how to be workers because this is the objective natural world they are about to enter. In order to compete in a globalized economy, students must not enter the market but enter the market prepared to be the best workers they can be for "just as the corporation replaces the factory, perpetual training tends to replace the school, and continuous control to replace the examination. Which is the surest way of delivering the school over to the

corporation," (Deleuze).

Once the material world becomes dominated by the market, the superstructural world had to react. Though this correspondence is never exact, as Althusser said, it is always economics "in the last instance." By this, I take it he means that the material base crafts the edge on which all other arguments must be cut. Perhaps there is some resistance, but, ultimately, the market will cut through and the necessity created by the market as status quo means that it will a priori establish itself as the reality against which all fantasy must be measured. As Ranciere reminds us: "since Marx, we know that the 'real' needs of society always serve to mask the interests of a class" (5). What is objective is always actually partisan.

Resurgence of Vocational Education

By way of neoliberalism and marketization, by way of positivism, by way of STEM, we see the resurgence of an already powerful strain of education come to absolute dominance in the form of vocationalization. The siren call of the supposedly newest, freshest, most modern form of education is that of job training. Even STEM will soon be phased out because it accidentally contains things such as theoretical physics and abstract mathematics, which, while having a positivist glow, do not contribute to the market. Positivism will have its use and it will eventually be ditched as the market achieves absolute dominance. The cries we hear for making education vocational however do not just come from cultural conservatives and capitalist ideologues. This is an idea that has been manufactured as common sense, and it has done this partially through the American narrative of democratization.

John Dewey, with great profundity, located the university's fundamental identity, which shows how, in my analysis, it was destined to fall and disintegrate with culture. Though he wrote in the early 1900s, his brilliant analysis still holds weight today. He locates the beginning of higher education in the Greek age, an age that is explicitly remembered with nostalgia and reverence. He, however, is conscious enough to know that despite the outer trappings of such a society, it could not have historically existed without the institution of slavery. From the very beginning of society, there is a hierarchal division of labor between the doers and the thinkers. The thinkers could only exist by way of enslaved doers that did everything that needed to be done so that the thinkers could have the privilege to think (Dewey, 144). For most of history, such practical, vocational doers have retained the disgrace of originating in this lower class form. They didn't work with their hands as much as had to work with their hands. Higher-class people were above such necessity. Dewey points out that the “class that enjoyed the privileges of freedom and a liberal education was based upon precisely those considerations that modern liberation has steadily striven to get rid of," (145). On the surface, we have indeed tried to make a more democratic society through a modern liberation but it persists within and behind our ideological structures. Culture itself "originates in the radical separation of mental and physical work. It is from this separation, the original sin as it were, that culture draws its strength," (Adorno, 203).

In this way too, we can see that the hierarchal view of culture is inherently based on such subjugation, but, as this subjugation historically dissipates, so too must this cultural structure dissipate. There emerges a discrepancy when everyone becomes "free" to work and must work, but some are still more cultured than others. The ascending form

of culture was inherently hierarchal and was destined to fail from the beginning with the historical development of consciousness. Traditionalists are then inherently regressive; implicitly taking on all the baggage such a regressive stance gives them.

With this cultural format inherently set against capitalism, because it valued things tangential to wealth and only somewhat tied up in it and its limited perspective on which to exploit, it had to be dismantled. Again, marketization disguises itself as rebellious rather than dominant, as a marginal voice rather than the author. Vocational education is seen as a democratization of ivory tower intellectual education, a narrative that corresponds perfectly with narratives about the founding fathers rebelling from the ruling British because it has the essential cell of resistance. We can see this again and again as proud conservatives take on the perspectives of victims because "in order to speak in today's academy one is constrained to assume a position of marginality. So even conservatives have to tell the story of their own marginalization from culture in order to speak for themselves," (Readings, 111). They speak as oppressed people who must fight for their downtrodden causes of Christian morality and market politics in the face of the supposed dominance of such bogeymen as politically correct discourse, multiculturalism, and "progressives" (always in scare quotes). As Readings says, in a purely marketized society, the power has moved from the top to the center to permeating the structure itself; the center of power has become invisible. In this context, the only thing that can have voice is the marginal, or what is disguised as marginal.

High culture is then democratized in the name of the people, breaking down the ivory towers not to bring intellectualism to the people but to hang the intellectuals and declare the guillotine a utopia. I must repeat this and say that intellectuals set themselves

up for this by perpetuating the high culture mythic structure inherently based on oppression, but everything else that is lost in this destruction does have value.

Marketizing Thought

Marketization is seeking to eliminate, in the name of the populous proletarian workers, for their supposed advantage, the very idea of critical thought. If the market is paramount, any thought not dedicated to getting a job, making money, and working hard is tangential. It can be tangential in emergent, residual, or alternative terms but its state never quite matters because its status is that of being extraneous. We can see this as high schoolers, before they are even adults, contemplate their educational paths in terms of their future careers. They are taught not in terms of exploration but in terms of limitation and narrowing in order to prepare themselves for marketability. Students are being asked to pick their major and with that, their career future before they can even vote or drink alcohol. Self-actualization is cut as tangential to a market reality that demands a child know itself fully so that it can reduce itself to a commodity. We must keep in mind this is not merely a false idea but a reaction to a material reality, namely, the price of college. College is a necessity for many jobs, but its supposedly priceless education is priced very highly. In a cutthroat market world, students will have to do whatever they can to lower that price, including reducing their humanities to a form of settling rather than curiosity. This is all justified by the idea that the market is reality, and a market good is really a common good. If this is conceptualized as sacrifice at all, it is seen as a sacrifice for a greater good.

As Henry Giroux says:

> "[i]n the corporate model, knowledge is privileged as a form of investment in the economy, but appears to have little value in terms of self-definition, social

> responsibility, or the capacities of individuals to expand the scope of freedom, justice, and democracy. Stripped of ethical and political considerations, knowledge offers limited (if any) insights into how schools should educate students to push against the oppressive boundaries of gender, class, race, and age domination. Nor does such a corporate language provide the pedagogical conditions for students to think critically, take risks politically, or imagine a world governed by civic values rather than corporate interests. Education is a moral and political practice and always embodies particular views of social life, a particular rendering of what community is, and an idea of what the future might hold," (263).

Despite the narratives being espoused generally, the supposedly objective marketization and vocationalization of education is not done naturally or apolitically but is done because it embodies a certain vision of social life, especially of the community and its future. The marketization vision sees workers and commodities, not people. We can see this, as Giroux says, through how marketization dictates how knowledge's value is defined.

Knowledge is merely an investment, a means to an economic end, not a use value but an exchange value, something to be circulated in order to bring profit. Essentially, this is being shaped not as a certain kind of knowledge or even the best kind of knowledge but simply as *the* knowledge. Everything else is not merely tangential but is unreal, hogwash, and pretentious drivel. Further, as Elizabeth Povinelli points out: "Within a neoliberal state, any social investment that does not have a clear end— a projected moment when input value (money, services, care) can be replaced by output value—is not merely economically suspect but morally suspect, no matter the life-enhancing nature of the investment," (Povinelli).

Humanities education is either eliminated or neutralized, fragmented, and commodified as the "older, inherited ways of doing things are broken into their component parts and reorganized with a view to greater efficiency according to the

instrumental dialectic of means and ends, a process that amounts to a virtual bracketing or suspension of the ends themselves and thus opens up the unlimited perspective of a complete instrumentalization of the world: cultural institutions could scarcely hope to resist this universal process, which sunders subject from object and structurally colonizes each separately, producing hierarchies of functions according to their technical use," (Jameson, 220). Of course, with Marx, we know this is not some random chance but is motivated by the dominant class because, after all, "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas," (Marx, 229) and, as Giroux points out and neoliberalism encourages and marketization ensures, corporate business is currently the ruling class. Anything tangential to them is tangential to reality.

This achieves its full force in what Giroux calls an "audit culture" wherein money must constantly be traced and controlled down to its last dime. Though the educational boom during the Cold War also focused on STEM and increased market and cultural viability, money was free to flow in a market that had at least some of the dynamism capitalist purports to have. In late capitalism, dominance has been handed to administrators that track every dollar, and, through this magnified clarity, through this exact calculus, absolutely nothing can be justified that cannot be proven to have an immediate return on investment. Money has gone from being central to absorbing that which was situated around it.

The humanities is being gradually expunged of anything with the potential for emergent radicalism by way of this ideology. Subjects like women's studies and African American studies, which inherently focus on oppression, become the icon of wasted time. Literature, philosophy, and history are little more than additional context to what the

world really is. Social science and abstract STEM are simply wasted potential. The ultimate marketization is the marketization of life, and as students and human beings have their humanities reduced to their natures as workers, everything else can be eliminated as intrusive, unnatural, inefficient, and wasteful. The most fundamental thing to get rid of, to disintegrate, is students' humanities and this is what we will cover next.

Student Alienation

A priori cynicism

For the everyday work of the humanities teacher, the problem most likely to overtly occur is not these manifold issues of marketization but the pedagogical struggle of working with and trying to work through student cynicism. The symptoms of cynicism are easy for even a relatively unpracticed teacher to notice. Bodily and behavioral symptoms include glazed eyes, sighs, furrowed brows, hands obscuring the face or eyes, fidgeting, etc. Often, it's not even this subtle as students defiantly turn in subpar work, exhibit their distraction and boredom, dismiss both the content and form of teaching out of hand, and more. Students are rarely as creative as when trying to invent new ways to display their lack of engagement both in the material in front of them and in school and society as a whole.

The struggle to teach has become a struggle to capture engagement. In this age of teaching, teachers cannot even count on attention but must contend with the fact that most students already dismiss them. As Martin Haberman sympathetically describes: "[t]he classroom […] seethes with passive resentment that sometimes bubbles up into overt resistance. Teachers burn out because of the emotional and physical energy that they must expend to maintain their authority every hour of every day," (291). A site of student alienation is also a site for teacher alienation.

With our study of culture, identity, and ideology in mind, especially Russon's therapeutic focusing of these ideas, we can begin our analysis of this behavior with the idea that students are not as neurotic as they may seem, but are, in fact, responding rationally to a contradictory world. Their responses usually do produce neurotic behavior

and mental patterns, but the responses themselves do not issue from a damaged mind but come from responses to environmental stimuli that they may or may not be entirely picking up on themselves. As always, in order to read these texts, we must engage in the contexts and how they mesh together and rewrite the texts.

Market Infection

As detailed in this project so far, marketization and neoliberal ideology have become dominant forces in modern society. Especially noxious in this institution is, which Marx pointed out in *Capital*, the market's necessary function as an accumulating, growing, hungry cycle of exploitation. For the dynamic potential of capitalist production to be tapped, for capitalism to realize itself, it must constitute itself as an always-growing entity. Capital cannot rest but must grow, spread, establish itself, replace what used to be there, and assert its dominance. If a CEO leads a meeting with his stockholders by saying that high profits have merely been sustained, that is not good news. Profit must be continually growing or else it risks being in decline, something capitalism cannot allow.

The market, already dominant in life and ideology, is still expanding, but not only in an outward and external sense but in an internal mode. As previously discussed, individuals are constituted by their articulation of the social language as run through intersecting social narratives either pliant or firm depending on the degree of structural ideological calcification. In a marketized context, all of these items are subsumed within a market discourse, the only articulation deemed suitable for them being a marketized one. Reality is homogenized within the market, commodified into merely being an instance of the market.

This can be seen quite clearly if we translate this metaphor literally to see how

students articulate themselves and are referred to as “customers,” “workers,” and “investments” within the university. This is not simply a repressive language impelled on them, as students often use the discourse of consumer rights to demand certain improvements to their education. This does not make it a radical or recommended form of change, but it shows that marketization has already defined the grounds on which educational struggles may be waged. Within a marketized context, we are always already struggling with the conception of the individual as merely a thing. Within the neoliberal university in particular: "the economic exchange between the student and the institution becomes the defining relationship between the two," (Saunders, 62). Through this market relation, both are reduced to commodities.

As marketization replaces culture and identity with the market, an ultimately dialectical contradiction is ideologically resolved so that a dynamic humanity is reduced to a metaphysical commodity. This change, to be analyzed in detail, is again, not implanted through a repressive regime but is continually imported by way of rationalization, justification, and crisis care. With capitalism consecrating the market as reality, all changes are measured by their correspondence to this objectivity. As capitalism entrenches itself in a culture of crisis, wherein everyday life is constituted by an overwhelming concern over one's precarious position in the market, marketization can then be continually justified in order to ensure protection against the dangers of the very acceptance of the market.

Internalizing Precariousness

For young students entering into the neoliberal state of constant market precariousness, stability is hardly even distantly available. Especially in particularly deep

market downturns, when older adults must lower their standards to take jobs undergraduate students and high schoolers would normally take, students enter college already accustomed to the feeling of unemployment and underemployment. Of course, this especially damages already impoverished students, but it affects a majority of students whose parents still expect them to work a side job to school or work through college to pay for it. Students are distinctly aware that this possibility no longer works, no matter how much they sacrifice their time and sweat for minimum wage jobs over their schoolwork.

From high school to graduate school, students are intimately familiar with their precarious positions in society. It is from this fear, institutionalized through constant economic crises, that students internalize both their alienation from the market and the desperate need to attach themselves to it. Students survive college but "internalize the economy's failure, as a media chorus excoriates them over what they should have done differently. They jump to meet shifting goalposts; they express gratitude for their own mistreatment: their unpaid labour, their debt-backed devotion, their investment in a future that never arrives," (Kendzior). In the constant crush of market crises, students become initiated not into cultural leadership but into an abusively laborious relationship under capitalism. Crisis capitalism then "thrives on a culture of cynicism, insecurity, and despair," (Giroux, 249). It is no wonder that students enter the university cynical when the worldwide system of capitalism profits from them by forcing them to only be conscious of their market value and repress other values as tangential.

This system is transmitted through fear:

> "today, the point of education is not education. It's accreditation. The more accreditation you have, the more money you make. That's the instrumental logic

> of neoliberalism. And this instrumental logic comes wrapped in an envelope of fear. And my Ivy League, my MIT students are the same. All I feel coming off of my students is fear. That if you slip up in school, if you get one bad grade, if you make one fucking mistake, the great train of wealth will leave you behind. And that's the logic of accreditation. If you're at Yale, you're in the smartest 1% in the world. […] And the brightest students in the world are learning in fear. I feel it rolling off of you in waves. But you can't learn when you're afraid. You cannot be transformed when you are afraid," (Diaz).

Fear insulates the student from the world, from confronting themselves in such a way that would impel transformation.

Before the university will even accept them after all, students must mold themselves into the kind they would want to accept, which is usually a marketized version of themselves. Crisis culture further makes it impossible to resist such a need because economic needs always assert their primacy in terms of survival. Students then frame their education as the shaping of applications, participating in clubs and sports, getting good grades and studying; all is under the sway of the application. The student is already enmeshed in a process of retrofitting their past in objectified terms and directing their future in accordance with market potential.

This is further cemented as students' desperation drive them to apply to as many scholarships as possible in order to pay for the immense price of college. Within neoliberal ideology, most scholarship owners still see themselves as being charitable rather than providing a now necessary service, so these funds typically sort themselves to students who have "earned it." In large part, this money goes to students who need it the least, students that have been given the structural advantages for getting good grades, transportation to community service, and connection-based leadership opportunities. Disadvantaged students are largely locked out of this funding unless they can find scholarships that require essays and other work that gives them the chance to prove

themselves in other ways. For these students, already overworked by their conditions, this amounts to slaving over arbitrarily difficult projects in order to stake a claim to survival. Scholarship work often constitutes a job in it of itself but it is typically added on to another job the student is working.

The Remnants of Ascension

Students enter the university under the assumption that for the most part, the university is still an outdated cultural institution. Though the decay of culture may be a heart-rending idea for many academics, it is common sense to students. Culture is something that has been made distant and untouchable to them, but in this distance, it has only proved its own pretentiousness, with market values being both within reach and affirmed as more valuable. Though teachers continue to teach on the behalf of culture in the forms of literature, history, philosophy, etc.: "[t]he school represents a culture distinct from these students and their families, no matter how the school tries to represent itself. School literature is distinct from many people's culture, no matter how hard it tries to present the heritage of the people in glossy courses whether separatist or integrationist. The texts presented represent a canon of ‘high’ culture, not one of ‘mass’ culture," (Purves, 8). The structure that once demanded students ascend is now being severed from the bottom by marketization. High culture is less being destroyed by direct dismantling and more by the cutting of a balloon by its cord, letting it float overhead without any attention being paid to it.

The culture students are enmeshed in, the one with which they are familiar, is not one of ascending but one of market defined democracy. Despite material facts to the contrary, it is largely accepted that anyone can partake in this popular mass culture in

equal amounts, this market form of democracy being credited to capitalism and media: "[m]edia culture has brought with it the merging of ethnic and cultural strands in food, dance, music, drama, and dress. Advertisers and producers change the color or the language of their commercials, but they do not change the content. Such a broad culture is the culture of the students," (Purves, 8). This wide student culture is not truly diverse but is simply a larger assortment of appropriated items for sale. Still, students are immersed in this seemingly infinite popular culture that extends through, past, and beyond them.

Even when not explicitly done, the implementation of high culture still associates itself with the ascending model and links itself with pretentiousness. From birth, students are already familiar with a form of culture that demands little from them but their basic participation, even seemingly leaving it up to them to choose among the many commodities on display. The school however, takes these cultural objects and makes them a "matter of study and testing. The commercial culture makes no such demands on the students; they can become part of it, learn it, and even become experts in it without taking any tests, seeing coercion, or feeling the threat of failure behind the invitation to partake in it," (Purves, 8). The old form of ascending culture can now be cut as if it were the only coercive and alienated structure. In the name of the market, culture is destroyed and students enter the university suspicious of any cultural education that does not directly tie itself to the market.

Historically and materially, the cultural framework has not been entirely excised because such a sudden change would still be too shocking, even to the cynical student. We still work within a mixed context of market dominance, cultural tangents, humanities

waste, and intellectual diversions. For the administrator dominant university, the “easiest and most administratively satisfying solution is to make use of what is already there in the autonomous departments and simply force the students to cover the fields, i.e., take one or more courses in each of the general divisions of the university: natural science, social science and the humanities. The reigning ideology here is breadth, as was openness in the age of laxity. The courses are almost always the already existing introductory courses, which are of least interest to the major professors and merely assume the worth and reality of that which is to be studied," (Bloom, 342). The modern liberal arts university then focuses the methodology of its form on the widest absorption of content possible to it. Students are thinly stretched to cover as much as possible in order to belatedly justify the aging narrative that they emerge from the university as more highly cultured people. Because marketization has greatly limited and continues to limit such efforts however, this breadth is limited to a sampling of other courses, usually introductory ones.

For science students, they may have to take an introductory English class which English majors would never have to see, a class fitted to align not with introducing them to literature but with introducing literature to them. Reading and writing are reduced to mechanical activities, usually in an effort to improve rhetoric and communication. On the other hand, humanities students are often introduced to science courses through introductory courses that are usually required by those departments. This means that they are often massively difficult in an effort to "weed out" students that are not dedicated enough to those respective majors.

This fits in with a pattern of alienated failure they are likely already experienced

with: "[w]hen you ask a sample of individuals what are the main factors of achievement at school, the further you go down the social scale the more they believe in natural talent or gifts–the more they believe that those who are successful are naturally endowed with intellectual capacities. And the more they accept their own exclusion, the more they believe they are stupid, the more they say, 'Yes, I was no good at English, I was no good at French, I was no good at mathematics,'" (Bourdieu, 269). Bourdieu shows here how the liberal arts model can be infected by neoliberal ideology, so that exploration is not encouraged. Students are taught not to be curious but to exclude themselves, to assume that if they have failed, it must be their fault. Rather than constantly accepting all of this blame, they rationalize it by chalking it up to one's natural set of skills. While this alleviates the pain and pressure for a time, it further seals them within an ideology that does not believe them capable of anything. This breadth then usually results in a lot of failures, a lot of stress, and most often, the swarming of science departments that happen not to fit into this model, usually Geology and Astronomy. This feels especially unfair as students are increasingly hyperconscious of the cost for each of these classes. When they aren't seen as worthwhile, their high price tag seems like another slap in the face. In this material market ideology, they cannot be blamed for becoming cynical about the liberal arts model that seems to suck wealth away from them without any return on this alienated investment.

Either way, this liberal coverage model merely becomes a path to extraordinary easiness or difficulty, with neither being fitted to the needs or wants of the students. Students are introduced to the university by being forced to either (and often both) suffer the stress of the university immediately trying to eliminate them or to suffer extreme

levels of boredom. The university as a whole and the liberal arts form in particular weathers waves of cynicism upon this introduction, as students are overtly not engaged with their education. From the very start, education is not about them but suits some other purpose, with them being merely extraneous factors.

The university then explicitly establishes itself as an institution that will not engage them. Students have most likely already endured deep alienation throughout middle and high school, largely due to batteries of standardized tests and classes fitted to teaching to those tests. Students enter the university with their cynicism not budding but in bloom, encouraged by a previous system. Developmentally, students are also in a period of life most vulnerable to alienation, past the innocence of youth and before the acceptance of humility in full adulthood, a twilight period wherein students must learn their tiny place in the world without being equipped to healthily accept such a realization. This is a time ripe for young people to reject any concern that attempts to deal with the supposed reality of nihilism.

Commodifying Students

Though students may and will attempt to reject anything and everything that doesn't matter to them, most will accept something, even grudgingly, in order to give their lives some shape and direction. For young people, this involves the engagement in social reality in the forms of friends, passions seen as divergent from societal desires, and as previously discussed, immersion in popular culture. This context persists well into high school but upon applying to college, there is a dominant social narrative that this is the time to grow up, to mature, and leave childhood behind. Though youth survives well into adulthood, the university is there to welcome students into adulthood in a marketized

context; this adulthood is a market one. If the university engages them in anything, and this is impelled by the wider culture as well, it is in their need to become commodities.

As Marx analyzed, capitalism dialectically interpellates people within a double determination as workers and as commodities: "[l]abor produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity," (71). Historically, for traditional assembly line capitalism, the dominant aspect of this contradiction would have been the worker. Through wage slavery and scientific management, the person is fitted into a worker, their humanity reduced to their earning potential. Subordinately, they are also shaped into commodities, as objects to invest in so that surplus value can be produced. The university presents a unique historical context wherein this contradiction is flipped. Students cannot quite be workers because the nature of the university places them as recipients of knowledge, necessarily inexperienced, so the value they are capable of producing is hardly worthy of profit. That being said, the corporatization of the university has produced a number of business tie-ins wherein students do directly work with corporations, implicitly helping their profit margins in the guise of earning experience. Similarly, students are expected to get themselves internships where they must work for nothing but the value of experience, an overt scam that is justified by the student's precarious economic placing forcing them to take anything available in order to ensure marketability.

But in this modern context, the aspects of this contradiciton have flipped, and the students are taught to be commodities more than they are taught to be workers. Especially in crisis capitalism, "[t]hese labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the

vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market," (Marx, 216). The student is dominantly engaged in the process of being turned into a commodity, so they must be exposed to the market and all its forces. Students only engage in the worker aspects in order to improve their marketability as commodities, and in this sense, the student worker is tied to the externality of the market: "the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another," (Marx, 74). Students are then ideologically tied to an external force that does not react to them but alienates them.

The objectification of humanity becomes not a consequence of marketization but a direct goal. As Marx said: "[t]he product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labor. Labor's realization is its objectification," (Marx, 71) so for the student laborer to realize itself as a product, it must become objectified. "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce," (Marx, 150). With this organizing principle in mind, with the student as the locus of analysis and education around them localized as efforts at commodification, we can see past and upcoming analysis center on this goal. If students are meant to become commodities, the entirety of marketization can be justified by aligning with this goal. If students are to objectify themselves, anything human (coded as tangential or wasteful) must be eliminated for the sake of efficiency.

In this way, the destruction of the humanities in the institution mirrors the destruction of the humanity of students. Institutionally, the humanities should function as

the conscience, as the critical creative theoretical mind of the institutional body, but it is eliminated in favor of the hands of engineering and the reasoning of math. Students are to have their humanity diminished until it is eliminated, so that they are merely left with hands as tools to work over the material in front of them. Supposedly ultimate freedom has provided us with the freedom to be trapped in a profound unfreedom.

Students are not mere ideologues in this process of marketization. In fact, their cynicism often results from a self-consciousness of this process. Students know what they must become, and many often resist it and try to dismiss it. However, as Raymond Williams explains, the reality students posit in reaction to this dominance rarely exists at all, and if it does, it is a residual alternative, not actually oppositional and utterly unlikely to become emergent. Cynicism traps students not in a process of resistance but in a continuous act of dismissal that works as an escape valve for resistant tendencies, allowing any rebellious energy to merely flush out in the form of non-oppositional disengagement. Further, this usually allows for the idea that once students have exhausted themselves of this negative outpouring, they will have then grown up by accepting market reality. Never is the student actively engaged in authentically resistant, oppositional, revolutionary thought. Rather, as Jameson expounds, the students' "utopian desire" for things to be different and possibly better than they currently are, is both denigrated and ignored, forcing it to wilt without any cultivation. Students slip into cynicism as the only resistance open to them and slip back into marketization once this paltry utopian desire is exhausted.

Dehumanizing students

Under the mantle of marketization, humanity as student is then directed to develop with accordance of becoming a commodity. With the calculus of exchange value, this means that difference cannot be valued: "[t]he blessing that the market does not ask about birth is paid for in the exchange society by the fact that the possibilities conferred by birth are molded to fit the production of goods that can be bought on the market. Each human being has been endowed with a self of his or her own, different from all others, so that it could all the more surely be made the same," (Horkheimer, 9). Sameness is valued so that student-commodities can be more efficiently invested in and circulated throughout the market as workers. To become the best commodities, students must objectify and reduce themselves as much as possible to a base line similarity, differentiated only by their chosen profession.

This is exemplified in class discussions wherein different sides tend to trend toward two extreme poles, those of cynical relativism and absolute intentionality. When discussing a text, the first analysis to be broached and the hardest to overcome is the surface level of sameness. Either meaning is universally singular to be transmitted from the author to the reader in a passive process, which makes difference illusory and sameness absolute, or meaning is universally multiple to be entirely interpreted by readers in their own individual ways, which makes difference negligible and sameness defunct. They are merely two different directions to proliferating a set of meanings as object products rather than mutable, social, co-creations. Meaning is reduced to a mere choice, though market ideology exalts choice and through that consumption as the highest instance of humanity at work. Students may not disagree directly, but in their

unarticulated structure of feeling, there is an alienation from the text that amazingly lets meaning, something that should by definition *mean*, mean nothing. The text is not engaged with relationally but is consumed as an object, implicitly objectifying readers through their methodology.

To accomplish this, market ideology does not teach this still horrifying concept as concept but filters it through structure. Within the university, the very substance of knowledge, the very units of human theory and action are ossified into units of ideological constitution: "[t]hought is reified as an autonomous, automatic process, aping the machine it has itself produced, so that it can finally be replaced by the machine," (Horkheimer, 19). Thought, which should at the very least have the powers of reflection, study, criticality, and creativity is reduced to an automatic process that the student is expected to complete. We can see this reflected in standardized tests, which, while directly impacting the format of education, also show the ideal skills it is supposed to be implanting, only asking students to absorb and regurgitate information. Even the meager requests of the SAT's writing portion have been eliminated in favor of the more mathematically precise natures of the reading and math sections. This is the expectation of a machine and this expectation raises machines.

Paulo Freire, in his inception of critical pedagogy, spends a great deal of time critiquing what he calls the "banking system" of education. In this conception of the marketized school, students are only seen as sites of investment. Education becomes a process of shaping the available knowledge by neutralization, censorship, and delimitation to only make available knowledge that is neutered to be a mere market value. Knowledge is merely something to be circulated into the students so that such an

investment can return on investment in profit in the economy. Most importantly, the students are treated as passive receptacles in which to place knowledge, not as active agents in their own rights.

"The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them," (Freire, 73). Students are taught that being successful, that being knowledgeable and intelligent is thus defined by their ability to adapt to market circumstances, and this identity is practiced through the continual absorption and regurgitation of knowledge-as-commodity so that the student too can become a commodity. This "leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into 'containers,' into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are," (Freire, 71). The student is treated as a passive container only so that marketization can complete the process of sealing it up within itself so that it can be entirely objectified.

Students become ever more vulnerable to ideology as they are trained into passivity and objectification, as something to be filtered through the market structure than acting with it. At all points, the students are in the world rather than with it (Freire, 75), subjects only in that they are commodities within the marketplace. The world is something entirely determined a priori, with their interactions suited only to adaptation and function within it. "The reduction of thought to a mathematical apparatus condemns

the world to be its own measure. What appears as the triumph of subjectivity. the subjection of all existing things to logical formalism, is bought with the obedient subordination of reason to what is immediately at hand," (Horkheimer, 20). With the objectification of thought comes the objectification of humanity and this reduction disables students from living with the world, ensuring that they can only deal with what is at hand rather than engaging in either critique or creativity to envision a world beyond it or different to it: "[o]ur quest becomes not to figure out what ethically and politically is desirable but what is technically possible," (Kincheloe, 13). Our visions are restrained to what is in front of us and we become destined to affirm and repeat it.

Further, any knowledge gained comes from a space is sanitized of humanity: "[t]he subject matter is ready-made in the sense that it is presented as an end in itself. It does not have to be connected to any other experience; it has only to be committed to memory. Not only does the knowledge come ready made, but it is second hand as well. It is second hand in the sense that it is the result of other people's exploration and discovery. Where the knowledge came from or how it was arrived upon is not important. Devoid of context, like other reflections of the culture of positivism, the second-hand knowledge is learned in isolation from lived experience," (Kincheloe, 14). Knowledge is an object to be passed along, to be consumed in turn. The humanity that constitutes it is purified from consciousness and the history that generated it is ignored as tangential. What remains is an objectified form of knowledge that serves to objectify the learner. Humanity is always second to the market.

The market becomes the only reality and the "actual is validated, knowledge confines itself to repeating it, thought makes itself mere tautology. The more completely

the machinery of thought subjugates existence, the more blindly it is satisfied with reproducing it," (Horkheimer, 20). Within a discourse that only allows for market knowledge and marketized forms of apprehending knowledge, this actuality can only be validated and reproduced along an assembly line of blind inspectors approving the only thing they've been taught to feel. As Horkheimer goes on to say, the “regression of the masses today lies in their inability to hear with their own ears what has not already been heard, to touch with their hands what has not previously been grasped; it is the new form of blindness which supersedes that of vanquished myth," (28). This form of blindness is not a natural occurrence of this age but an artificial situation crafted by a dominant market order for the purposes of sustaining and reproducing itself. Historical consciousness has regressed in a neoliberal ideology that cannot apprehend it. With the decay of consciousness goes the decay of humanity, rotting in a seemingly endless cycle of repetition as its most distinctly human feature is consigned to passive affirmation. The world is entirely over and against the student, something to be initiated into rather than changed.

An Initiation in Alienation

This is then a prime site of alienation, justified because the rest of society is alienated, and students needing to be initiated into it. Marketized education is an initiation into disengagement, into passivity, objectification, dehumanization, and limitation. This is encouraged and justified by way of the myth of maturity, which situates the market as the ultimate height of development. Keeping positivism in mind, we can see how such things as emotion and subjects like the humanities that are linked to emotion can be situated as immature and childish. They are at best unreal diversions,

fantasies that delay one's development into adulthood, worthwhile only as momentary distractions or escapisms. Anything that interests the student outside of marketability, especially anything that generates excitement, is bracketed as a waste of time. Students are meant to grow up by severing these ties, achieving adulthood once they have developed into their true selves as economic actors. With everything else being tangential, maturity becomes a process of stripping down to the essentials, to the streamlined and efficient core of human action. Cynicism is then a necessary step along this road to maturity as students learn they must relinquish the innocence and naiveté of youth for the realistic concerns of market adulthood. Cynicism is merely a frustrated bump on the way to learning to accept reality as it is.

Higher education has become a crash course in alienation. One need only study the behavioral patterns of students trying to live up to the expectations most colleges set to see that education does not place one's life activity as paramount. Students often push themselves to the brink of exhaustion, often over it, by refueling their energy with sugary sodas and energy drinks. Studying can extend into the early morning hours, to the point where "all nighter" has become a universally recognizable term. Students habitually skip meals and disrupt their sleep cycles in order to fit in all the studying they need to do. This often leads to bad health habits and sickness, calamities further punished by often infantilizing systems that demand students get a doctor's note despite being ill in order to get a pass from demanding attendance regimes. As feminist theorists have known for a long time now, it needs to be recognized that infantilization is an important step on the way to dehumanization. Once you treat someone as being so young and underdeveloped to have no mature faculties, it is a quick turn to considering them as not having a

distinctly human presence. Students then often study through sickness, going to class and spreading illnesses so as not to be perceived as weak, childish, and ultimately lesser.

Of course, the studiers have it lucky because more and more students are asked to pile on hours of work at a job on top of their schoolwork. This vast amount of work is then unequally and unfairly structured based on who has the privilege of having transportation, parents that can assist you when needed, connections to local jobs, etc. Even beyond schools themselves, grades become the metric of a student's healthiness. A student could very well be suffering from depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, but without poor grades, mental illness will often not be diagnosed by the school or the parent. On the flip side, bad grades universally indicate that something is wrong with the student and whatever it may be is her fault. On campus counseling centers take a half turn into becoming tutors, trying to help students recover from the grades that not only indicate depression but may also take part in causing it. Above all things, a student must be "excellent", so such conversations always go in the direction of what the student can eliminate from their life, what they must sacrifice in order to be excellent enough.

As Kinecheloe states: "[m]en and women are students before they are workers. Workers who give up their control of the planning and direction of the activities which comprise their jobs, first surrender their autonomy to a teacher," (Kincheloe, 4). Through the labor of education and all of the alienated work that entails, students ideologically learn through this structure to surrender their autonomy, first to the teacher and eventually to market society itself. This process requires all of the above to break them down and ultimately eliminate or at least sideline most of the activities that make them human. "The more 'dehumanized' a bureaucracy becomes the more 'success' it attains,"

(Kincheloe, 4). Education trains students to assume the roles of machines. As Marx long ago analyzed, capitalism would ideally replace the whole of humanity with machines but must make do with humans so long as the technology is not yet there. In the meantime, people are bent and broken until they are as machinelike as possible.

Students come into college conceiving of school as a coercive act done upon them. When class is over they are “free” and when the weekend comes, they get the chance to feel alive and “real.” What Marx said about alienated labor applies equally to students: the more human aspects of their productive minds become sites of alienation and the more animalistic aspects of their consumption begin to seem more human. Students get some of their greatest joys from consumption, in the forms of drinking, eating, and, now, the over consumption of digital media. Consumption, though is it not a place for active humanity, actually seems more human in comparison to alienated labor.

Traditionalists of all kinds then denigrate students for being unable to work hard enough to overcome these difficulties. Again, without a structural understanding of history, older adults can only remember when they were able to work through college and assume such conditions have not significantly changed. People are continually raised to assume that history has not changed, and individuals must overcome circumstances or be assumed weak, immature, and disappointing. Conservatives see this and prescribe an extra dose of discipline to force students through, their reforms only involving a back to basics approach, a purification of "liberal" intrusions to the "natural" market of conservative Christian values. Haberman describes the conservative as enduring this as a "source of continual frustration. The clear-cut need to 'make' students learn is so obviously vital to the common good and to the students themselves that surely (it is

believed) there must be a way to force students to work hard enough to vindicate the methodology," (292). The vision is not questioned; only the students' alliance to it.

Progressives rarely do much better, allowing bureaucracy to mire vision as they overload curriculums with petty reforms that only serve to justify the conservatives' complaints. An example of the latter would be current pre college math reforms such as Everday Mathematics and Common Core that demand students learn a multiplicity of new methods of doing old math. Students from as young as grade school becoming cynical with the frustration of being unable to understand math, their parents (if they're available to help) soon follow when they are unable to complete the teaching that falls to them. This creates a feeling of over complication that only serves to fuel the conservative call for a traditional return.

Working the system

The thing to consider here is not students' ideological subservience to their treatment but the clear self-consciousness they have of it being impossible to change. By the time students enter college, they are intimately familiar with the idea that education will ask things of them that are simply impossible. Each student, no matter the grade level or apparent level of dedication, is at least familiar with and often a master of the double skills of cheating and faking. Cheating has been a perennial problem of education but it has become a necessary skill in marketized education. Sneaking a peak at someone's test however has evolved into an elaborate system of faking, strategies that construct the appearance of being a good student. Within a system that values exchange value as paramount, use value becomes tangential to appearing marketable. Students use the Internet to both outright plagiarize and use ideas that can impress a naive teacher.

Students become masters at rewording and rewriting other people's ideas until they appear as their own. Most students recognize the immorality of this act but with a shrug and a cynical laugh, they recognize the necessity.

Students become expert manipulators in order to measure up to an impossibly demanding standard. The classroom is tarnished as something inherently valued to be experienced but becomes a contested space between the students and teacher, something to be struggled over to impose one's vision of oneself. The classroom replicates the market as students compete amongst themselves to market themselves to the teacher for "students in the neoliberal university become less like members of a community of learners and more like individuals focused on enhancing their human capital and who are solely responsible and accountable to themselves," (Saunders, 63).

The quickest and most efficient way to construct a marketable appearance is through manipulation. This means taking easier classes to inflate grades, refusing challenges to sustain GPA, joining and creating empty clubs to stack transcripts, researching what teachers like and playing to their satisfaction, and if it comes down to it, bringing in parents to demand the grades they rightfully deserve. Though critiques of these behaviors abound, we must recognize that this is what the system demands students do in order to compete. If a student engages in "too many" challenges, their grades will appear lower and they will be less marketable. Students are conditioned to view challenges as tangential and/or impossible. They must be dismissed or manipulated. Student relations are reduced to either cynically gaming the system or cynically disengaging from it.

This emerges out of classroom activity into competitive relations between

educational subjects. Students are immediately enmeshed in a competition to choose which educational major will lead them on a path to success and happiness, a path usually conflated with one leading to wealth and renown. They are encouraged to choose among a variety of subjects that will dictate the rest of their educational choices, with some small space for a subservient minor path and maybe a couple of electives. The pressure immediately sets in to pick one's final choice, because as each semester passes, the less likely one is to complete it. Curriculums have become so dense that a change in major often necessitates at least an extra year in college, an extra year that many scholarships don't fund.

Even colleges that are supposedly proponents of liberal arts structurally discourage exploration because exploration always costs money and almost always damages marketability. Students are accustomed to this pressure however, because they have been long been demanded before college to shape their education, their learning, their passions, and their personas to what can eventually make them the most money. Higher education is another step, the strongest step, in a process of professional specialization that narrows the range of knowledge and the reach of the students to a smaller and smaller grasp. For a dynamic market however, this isn't necessarily good: "[i]ronically, the more specialized the knowledge, the more vulnerable the bearer to the vicissitudes of the job market," (Aronowitz, 112). Still, capitalism drives toward its own destruction as competition necessitates focus, and focus necessitates safety and hedged bets. Despite claims to the contrary, college educates consciousness to be narrowed and lengthened, rather than widened and deepened.

Within these narrow ranges of focus, students and departments compete amongst

each other for legitimacy, so that they can ensure funding from administration. From the first day, students begin to take on the identity of whichever major and thus whichever profession they've chosen, often using it as an ice breaker to define and introduce themselves. Arguments constantly erupt about which major is "best" and which is the most worthwhile to pursue: "[t]he college major debate - in which 'skill' is increasingly redefined as a specific corporate contribution - extends this inequity to the undergraduate level, defining as worthless, both the student's field of study and the person teaching it," (Kendzior). Market language is usually the ultimate trump card, defeating arguments for happiness, satisfaction, and social necessity, always ignoring largely due to fear, that "[c]hanging your major will not change a broken economy,"
(Kendzior). Interdisciplinarity is dismissed in favor of narrow competition and professionalization.

Though these arguments seem petty, they are reflections of departmental arguments that are waged in somewhat more implicit languages. Funding is always needed, and in order to get it, departments must engage in the market to sell themselves and to appeal to money-minded administrators; selling oneself is always key. In this way, even detractors are pulled into reducing themselves to market terms in order to get enough funding to sustain themselves. Humanities departments know they are ideologically precluded from being as marketable as STEM fields, but they are still forced to engage in this losing discourse, often claiming that such things as communication, critical thinking, and rhetoric are essential job skills that can be gained by studying literature and philosophy.

This discourse is not a neutral manipulation however, for the more it is used the

more the department must actually shift to supplying such skills and supplying them in such a way as to satisfy the administrator-inspectors. These educations, which are formally, explicitly, logistically, and fundamentally not set up for this work must be reduced in order to take it on. The continuous but understandable thought process is that a compromised education is still better than none at all. When it comes down to keeping a colleague or keeping a course, most educators will side with such compromised language in order to secure some sort of future. As always, capitalism makes the future bleak and forces alliance with it in order to stave off this very bleakness.

Within this context of competition, identification becomes strict with whichever major the student has chosen. They are not with their form of education but are in it, determined by it. We can see this as students, despite being in what is supposed to be a site of education, fiercely defend themselves from learning. This is overt, as students overtly dismiss the idea of liberal arts education because such general education courses are "wastes of time." Learning is not inherently valuable but is a means to an end, an end that is increasingly marketized. Even within their own educative spaces, students continually choose the most well trod courses, constantly funneling into what is easiest, what is closest to a core of already known knowledge. The only learning that can be justified is what is marketable, and even this is usually resisted. Students are taught to fear ignorance and find value in objectified knowledge as status.

As students shape themselves into commodities, the form of knowledge with which they are invested is one of passive objectification. They are told that knowledge is of great value but taught that ignorance is a liability, a contradiction that is repressed rather than resolved. They then want to take on the form of that knowledge and be fully

knowledgeable. Colleges then raise a generation of people that pretend their genius but run from any sign of their ignorance, egoists that find value in the aesthetic appearance of their knowledge rather than its use.

Even when professors try to work around this, students can be resistant. As Freire's work with peasants reveals, oppression can so deeply implant itself within a student's consciousness that it can be difficult to raise something different. He discusses a particular but common occurrence when trying to sustain a discussion: "They call themselves ignorant and say the 'professor' is the one who has knowledge and to whom they should listen. The criteria of knowledge imposed upon them are the conventional ones. 'Why don't you,' said a peasant participating in a culture circle, 'explain the pictures first? That way it'll take less time and won't give us a headache," (Freire, 63). This situation occurs not only with impoverished peasants but in upper class universities, a wide-ranging symptom of how market culture views knowledge.

Neutralizing Education

Students define themselves in ignorance as they define the professor in knowledge, conceiving of their relationship as a market trade off with themselves as customers. For the professor to ask any more than consumption from them is illogical and is often met with resistance. For one, it asks the student to move beyond their comfort zone: "students will not readily abandon all their know-how to take on willy-nilly some new and uncertain system that they may not be able to control," (Haberman, 292). After years of learning how to navigate and manipulate the system, students will not immediately be happy with change, even if it's for their own good or eventual happiness. Cynicism is deeply implanted long before students reach college.

We must not place all responsibility or blame on the teachers because the students themselves will defend the system that abuses them: "[t]he students' stake in maintaining [this system] is of the strongest possible kind: it absolves them of responsibility for learning and puts the burden on the teachers, who must be accountable for making them learn," (Haberman, 292). For young people consecrated as students within a culture of passivity, objectification, and marketization, their stake is in ensuring that their narrative roles are maintained because "[f]or an alienated person, conditioned by a culture of achievement and personal success, to recognize his situation as objectively unfavorable seems to hinder his own possibilities of success," (Freire, 157). Different pedagogical approaches that try to resist this system are then fundamentally seen as tangential, as superfluously difficult in a context that demands much less of them. Though students are cynical to their passivity and their abusive contexts, capitalism encourages they cling to this cycle for fear of their lives. Rather than attempt change, safety is found in conforming.

They are also raised in a situation where even such supposedly progressive concepts as critical thinking, creativity, and radicalism are commodified objects. Standardized tests all purport to test critical thinking skills, but these barely result in being able to ask a student to read a few paragraphs to point out logical inconsistencies. Critical thinking becomes a puzzle for a student to discover the one solution: "[t]he critical thinking exercises are presented with only minimal information and are calculated to elicit a pre-determined outcome. The form of sequential logic required is also pre-determined, and the narrow range of outcomes acceptable does not challenge prevailing wisdom," (Kincheloe, 15). Commodified critical thinking does not engage in any deep

criticism but merely confirms common sense, turning criticality into a rote repetition.

Creativity too is often valued only superficially, treated as a tangent that must be engaged off to the side of "real" work. The only creativity valued is one that can innovate to find a new way to make profit. As the glow of the 60s counterculture softens into nostalgia, even radicalism can become commodified. With Readings' hated “excellence” framework: "the discourse of excellence can incorporate campus radicalism as proof of the excellence of campus life or of student commitment" (Readings, 150). Student protests and demonstrations, which used to be violently shut down, are now destroyed in a more sophisticated way by absorbing them into the dominant order. An "excellent" student is now "involved" in campus activities and social change, of course, not in any way that is truly radical but in a way that contributes to their marketable persona, their excellence. "To put it bluntly, the shock value of punk is not lasting in a cultural sense, since it soon becomes possible to be 'excellently punk,'" (Readings, 121). Rebellion and resistance itself is commodified, re-situated as a phase of youth to be welcomed, endured, and passed.

Market Dominance

At all points, the educational hierarchy maintains its dominance. The struggles with resistance and with cynicism are merely a working out of the kinks that prepares students for a lifetime of passive labor. The educative system then reflects the outer system of alienated market labor. For instance, the “hierarchy in the workplace keeps those workers at the lowest rung of the ladder ignorant of the way the production process works as a whole. The low level workers see only a minute part of the process and they see it in isolation from the logic of the process. This ignorance requires that these workers

accept the fact that decisions regarding their work be made by higher-ups," (Kincheloe, 5). Similarly, students are insulted from educative conflict (as Graff detests) so that their authority can be delegated up to the teachers and administrators. This trains students to feel comfortable in their passive, subordinate role in the social hierarchy. When teachers try to push for more active learning "students who have had a more conventional education [will] be threatened by and even resist teaching practices which insist that students participate in education and not be passive consumers," (hooks, 143-4).

This aligns with how education severs knowledge from life and lived experience, sanitizing it as something isolated and objectified to be learnt mechanically. Without social context, students are left "[u]nable to understand the larger social, political, and economic picture, [and] the student has difficulty gaining control of his own life. He or she is left in a permanently subordinate position," (Kincheloe, 17). By being educated in their formative years to be passive and isolated beings, students are trained to assume subordinate roles and are stunted from even growing the capabilities of envisioning or enacting anything but subordination outside of school.

In large part, the system seems overtly set against the students, and their cynicism is a sign that they understand this. Education does not provide them with a "language of possibility" (Giroux) to create a vision of change or even of escape. Students are alienated from their life activity and alienated from any possibility of political engagement that can deeply change such a situation. Bourdieu shows that: “[p]olitical alienation results from the fact that isolated agents – and this is all the more true the more they are symbolically impoverished – cannot constitute themselves as a group, as a force capable of making itself heard in the political field, unless they dispossess themselves and

hand over their power to a political apparatus: they must always risk political dispossession in order to escape from political dispossession," (Bourdieu, 249). Students are always subservient economic agents before they are political agents so they are rarely capable of constituting themselves as a political body capable of change. The only slight power they can have is through dispossessing themselves into an apparatus, by allowing an almost entirely disempowered student president to lead them or by complaining up a ladder of authority to someone who, on a whim, may or may not help them. The first system is largely only capable of mollifying desire for change and the latter is set up to exhaust rebellion as students are continually blockaded up a chain of power.

Neoliberalism is highly capable of propagating power through disempowerment, constituting each holder of authority as someone who does not have the authority to stop the power they channel. Neoliberalism does not so much institute a system of overt repression as institute a superficially weak chain of authorities that cannot help but let the inertia of their own oppression carry on. Even the authorities are subordinate to the ultimate market authority with anyone capable of substantive change distantly away from being contacted. The bureaucracy spontaneously becomes autonomous on contact with resistance, so that by-laws, regulations, and rules that were previously in the background become an absolute impediment to any change being done. Capital so permeates the administrative system that it saturates it with inhumanity, with the inertia of machine force that cannot be countered.

Within this inevitable calculus of the machine, students perceive something of the inhumanity of life. Capitalism actually benefits from the horrors it introduces. Cynicism is a defense reaction against the inertia of the market. Its momentum is so vast, so

massive that it is often easier to become disenchanted with the very idea of changing it. It is a passive resistance that will ultimately lead to more alienation, but it must be understood as a role to be played within the machine. There is some comfort to this narrative because it gives students some separate individuality from that which subjectively alienates them. Life as it is seems impossible to avoid so one must accept it happily or cynically. Ultimately, the market doesn't care about the subjectivity of one's alienation but only cares about the material acceptance. It is this ultimate cynicism that nearly all students learn to accept: the market doesn't care about them beyond their exchange value and no matter how much they care about the market, it will not react. This relationship is essentially dead, characterized not by a dynamic dialogue but by a droning monologue, the societal mirror of the professor at the lectern heedlessly repeating his decades old lecture at the revolving rows of eyes seated before him.

Drudgery is to be adapted to in education just as in life. Students are conscious of unfairness but see it as natural and unchangeable, as something to be dismissed or manipulated. Students' overwhelmingly widespread subjective alienation reflects a structural alienation that removes education from being thinkable as an aspect of one's life activity. Education is not a part of life but an impediment to be suffered before life can be lived. School is a time of alienated work, when their humanity is repressed rather than cultivated. As Freire says, "[a]n act is oppressive only when it prevents people from being more fully human," (Freire, 56) and marketized education would then certainly qualify as an oppressive act.

Renewing the Humanities

The Position of the Critic

In "Cultural Criticism and Society," Theodor Adorno presents the accurate admonition that if one wants to be a cultural critic, one must become self-conscious of one's determination. In his estimation, one I agree with, too many would-be critics take on a position of transcendence wherein their criticism formally places them above culture, as something that has ascended beyond it and critiques it from above. In his words, "[t]he cultural critic is not happy with civilization, to which alone he owes his discontent. He speaks as if he represented either unadulterated nature or a higher historical stage. Yet he is necessarily of the same essence as that to which he fancies himself superior," (196). This position demands that the world rise to the critic's level. Even progressive critics often engage in this kind of discourse, simultaneously recognizing the structural determinations of society but implicitly denying them as they sublimate their own attempts to maintain the illusion they have somehow risen above it.

What Adorno instead recommends is the position of the self consciously immanent critic. In his terms, the truth of cultural criticism "consists in bringing untruth to consciousness of itself," (205). Rather than boring into society from an illusory without, the immanent critic bores from within. Though my position is just as liable to the same mistakes, I hope my perspective as a student situates me at a deeper center than most to have an especially productive boring. I have used readings as handholds to pull myself through, to get my analysis beyond myself despite it being rooted within me.

In the reflections that follow, it must be emphasized that these recommendations do not come from a place of transcendence. I do not view the goal of renewing the

humanities as a divinely projected mission but as a collective project that we must all work toward developing. I have not achieved some level of transcendence that allows me to see above the heights of everyone else, rather, higher education has, in some compromised and contradictory manner, achieved for me what I want it to achieve for everyone: engagement. These recommendations are then not me showing what education should be, but finding the elements of education within my own experience that need to be further emphasized, made more accessible, and spread more widely. In Raymond Williams' terms, the progressive elements that are there immanently need to be made emergent and oppositional. The humanities must be renewed from within, not without.

Illusory Emancipation

Many pedagogic theories however, fall exactly into the trap of transcendent critique. Such theoretical frameworks are not harmless academic abstractions but trickle down into pedagogical straggles that bind themselves to failure. As professors conceive of themselves as being above society, so do they try to elevate students to such a level. This has been discussed previously as traditionalist educators use discipline and individualist introspection strategies to elevate students to a higher cultural sense of being, but these teachers and these perspectives are dying out. Part of this is because of the death of the meta-cultural model of education and part of this is the death of the high culture dream. Students are now alienated more than ever by this model that must implicitly convince them they are low before they can attain a higher status. For students immersed in popular culture, this is alienating, and with a market reality framing their educational experience, the claim that it is worthwhile is not convincing.

This traditional form of education can be translated into a seemingly progressive

pedagogy that many teachers unfortunately find alluring. This is what I will call emancipatory education. This term generally encompasses certain sets of ideas that involve elevating the students to a state of transcendence wherein the students can accompany the professor in becoming free from society. The goal of this kind of education is the "achievement of a certain mimetic identity by the student: either as replication of the professor or as replication of a place in the system. And with this identity comes autonomy, or to put it more clearly, independence–the end of dependence, the end of obligated relations to others, (Readings, 157). Though this often disguised as the attaining of emancipation, since true emancipation is impossible, it must mutate into the repetition of a role that is accepted and treated as independent.

Within pedagogy, this takes the shape of inspiring students but not connecting such inspiration to practical reality. This often takes the forms of sharing great literature that exposes societal problems, engaging in discussions that circulate relevant and relatable issues, and immersing in general frustration. This often results in disenchantment from market reality but with only a critical theory, they are left floundering. Most often, this eventually results in cynicism that forces them to slip back into market reality reluctantly, either by giving up on their ideals or "realizing" their ideals were never realistic to begin with, the next step merely being a step in maturity. They try to enact what they see as true independence, truly emancipated freedom but it is impossible to realize and must eventually be left behind as an illusory dream: "[t]here is no emancipation from our bonds to other people, since an exhaustive knowledge of the nature of those bonds is simply not available to us," (Readings, 189). As Jameson says, "[t]he only effective liberation from such constraint begins with the recognition that there

is nothing that is not social and historical—indeed, that everything is 'in the last analysis' political," (20).

Other students, feeling emancipated from alienated society, either do not have the courage or the means to engage in its compromised nature. Instead, they swallow themselves in escapism that gives them the illusion of supporting norms. This is often done through counter normative art projects and utopian living circumstances. In the latter, students become completely alternative rather than oppositional, separating themselves from society, sometimes entirely and sometimes partially. A few deeply disillusioned ones will develop their own communes but most will try to leave as "ethical consumerists," which often involves eating different food, buying products at different places, and donating to charity. Other students try to transform their lives into artistic efforts as a means of living alongside but separate from society in a subversive way. Art, having been transformed into a vague almost non-referential category in postmodernism, can be a rock under which one can hide from society. By being counter normative, these artists fancy themselves as radicals, but they do not reach to the root of any problem, much less actually pull anything up. Perhaps one could claim Duchamp and the Dadaists were doing subversive political work, but historical consciousness has long passed them by. Art has a place in radical politics, but merely pushing against supposed artistic norms does not constitute much of a practice. As artistic theorists like Hegel and Adorno have studied, art is capable of doing a lot but merely wallowing in worrying about what art can be cannot hope to change things. We must ask what art should do.

Both methods, and they intersect often and diverge in different ways, are clearly, in Raymond Williams' terms, merely alternative. They do not constitute an actual

oppositional threat to the established order but merely live alongside it, merely pretending they are above. As Williams worries, these people actually function as a benefit to the system, by becoming parodies or escape valves. As parodies, they seem silly, delusional, and examples of what a non-market person is like to dissuade people from rebelling. As escape valves, they serve as outlets for society's resistant energy. Without a source to put in adequate radical resistance, such energy is merely sloughed off to the side of political reality. This is an example of being subjectively engaged but structurally alienated. Though they often feel like they are making a difference, they are not, and their energy is often still not going to personal and social development.

Despite some of these more extreme sounding examples, the probable result of emancipation is a continuation of cynicism. As said before, cynicism tends to trail the student upon entering college, but the university can often seem like an intellectual oasis, beckoning the student into wishful thinking about changing the world merely through academic analysis. Professors and students alike tend to think that the university is the world’s last utopia. Their dependence on the university exactly mirrors their frustration with society.

Their dependence soon turns to cynicism as the utopia cannot be extended. "Student frustration is directed against the inability of methodology, analysis, and abstract writing (usually blamed on the material and often justifiably so) to make the work connect to their efforts to live more fully, to transform society," (hooks, 88). Upon entering the world, especially with a humanities degree that doesn't prepare them to engage in the world as either a political or an economic agent, they are often left stranded without direction. With the immense weight of the world on their shoulders, they are

likely to turn away from their radical past and embrace cynicism knowing that optimism was merely a youthful phase.

All of these various failures result from an educational methodology that privileges the educator and the student as being above society, as having the possibly to transcend it. If education is perceived as something powerful enough to impossibly emancipate people from society, it can only lead to them disengaging from it. Their critiques will lose their relevance and their practical engagement will be next to nonexistent. They are still fundamentally alienated from society because it is not something within their reach as mutable and their energies still do not go toward their life activities.

Working in a compromised system

Much of emancipatory styled education comes from a well-meaning place, usually from leftist professors who are trying to make a mark on their world through their pedagogy. Often, the desire is to progress past traditionalist humanities education that is seen as being too locked into authoritarian pedagogies and impractical texts. This actually replicates what is merely a mutation of liberal enlightenment ideology, a transcendent perspective that Adorno heavily critiques in his work as well as in his work with Max Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* In an effort to transcend such failed efforts, progressive educators run the risk of abandoning immanently progressive reforms already instituted within education. As discussed before, the radical reforms of cultural studies and other minority studies contained a radical power to restructure the cultural foundation of education. No matter how much this change was commodified and instituted by the base power of market ideology, what has been incorporated has valuable potential.

Similarly, the humanities will not be able to emancipate itself from current collegiate structure nor be able to institute even more radical reforms, especially now the culture war has already been waged. Though struggle certainly needs to be waged on the behalf of sub cultures and oppressed groups, the battle to include them in college cannot alone constitute a radical politics. That said, any foundation to such a radical change would begin by supporting and elevating the status of the liberal arts college. This system has been compromised in numerous ways, but it is still the humanities' best source of support.

With the culture wars in the past and the fragmentation of meta-cultural theory already completed, liberal arts rhetoric must relent on the narrative of ascending culture. Such ascension means little to nothing to any students, and administrators have already proved willing to cut such programs on their behalf. A new strain of conservatism has swamped over the old one, so that even supposed traditionalists are arguing for cutting the humanities in favor of vocational education. Liberals construed as leftists are usually attacked as high intellectuals supporting such useless academic ventures, so they too have denounced much of liberal arts, again preferring the reality of the marketplace.

The difference between the two camps is not so much a difference of vision but a difference in compassion. Both envision society on the basis of the market, but the conservatives now want students to do it purely on their own as impossibly isolated individuals. Liberals put as much faith in the market but try to place some safety nets that can catch people when/if they fall. As Paulo Freire points out, this is merely a false generosity. This is the oppressor handing pocket change to the oppressed and pretending themselves heroes. "False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the 'rejects of life,'

to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands–whether of individuals or entire peoples–need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world," (45). True generosity comes not from giving to the outstretched hand but restructuring the system so that the hand no longer needs to reach out. Of course, neither side nor very few in the undecided, middle, or periphery are interested in this radical change.

Without a material market reality or either side of a political reality that can come close to supporting a radical humanities, we will have to work from within the vestiges of the liberal arts system. The rhetoric however must be changed so that, rather than taking the tempting defense strategy, liberal arts can situate itself as an oppositional entity. Of course, this does not mean a declaration of Marxism but that the common cultural narrative of liberal arts as a method of initiation into a higher or better culture is reversed into an oppositional democratic culturation.

As of now, despite efforts to the contrary, humanities programs are still seen as partaking in the pretentious act of elevating their students to something higher than others. The problem here is less the content of elevation (all though this certainly has its limits in exaggerated pretentiousness) but the structure of picking and choosing only certain people to receive this elevation. As far as the modern student sees it, vocational education is available for all and cultural education is stowed away for a few. These few are painted as pretentious, useless, impractical, and doomed to failure. This justifies the democratic narrative to bring these people down to the vocational level.

Liberal arts needs to appropriate and reverse this narrative to argue that the

mission of the liberals arts college is to bring everyone forward rather than drag the few down. As Dewey said, "[t]he problem of going ahead instead of going back is then a problem of liberalizing our technical and vocational education," (Dewey, 146) and not the other way around. Though this narrative is residual in places, it needs to be made emergent and directly oppositional to the rhetoric of vocational education. We need to make it overtly recognizable that "[b]y limiting the school curriculum to only the practical problems of daily life, such schools left access to the skills of *critical* reasoning only to those who were already in dominance," (Apple, 103). We not only need to create critical thinking but take it back.

Remaking liberal arts through conflict

To make this work however, humanities education will have to let go of the vestiges of the content of meta-cultural education and ascending culture. Liberal arts is often touted as being such a democratic effort but it cannot be believed when it still retains much of the inner ideological structure that envisages it as a place of initiation. One of the major ways to do this is, as Gerald Graff recommends, is to institute conflict into the curriculum of the school. According to Graff, "controversial issues are not tangential to academic knowledge, but part of that knowledge. That is, controversy is internal to the subject matter of subjects or disciplines-it is the object of knowledge or is inseparable from it," (xv). Instead, "[t]he tacit assumption has been that students should be exposed only to the results of professional controversies, not to the controversies themselves, which would presumably confuse or demoralize them," (8), a model that inherently assumes the student as a passive and even weak entity.

As has been analyzed, the man behind the curtain has been revealed and meta-

cultural theory cannot be assumed on the behalf of anyone. Students come in skeptical and cynical, often getting both of those presumptions fulfilled by an alienated and distant humanities that has made slight reforms but refuses to outwardly acknowledge the fact that its historical context has changed. Professors, of course, are for the most part not in denial of this but are continuing a long pattern of keeping such problems hidden from the students. Curriculum arguments, text inclusion, cultural visions, and more are discussed and debated behind closed doors and out of the student's eyes. Even as the university is fractured and gasping on its last cultural legs, it still tries to present a calm and unworried face to the student. This is undoubtedly done with good intentions, but it only serves to confirm the suspicions the student has that the humanities is an out of touch discipline because they do not appear concerned about their own construction. Even as they have consciously changed in vast ways, the appearance they put forth suggests they are still riding high on their remaining inertia. Though things may have internally changed, "[a]n institution is not merely a few walls or some outer structures surrounding, protecting, guaranteeing, or restricting the freedom of our work; it is also and already the structure of our interpretation," (Derrida, 102) so as long as this institutional facade is maintained, so will our interpretations of what it can do be compromised.

Instead of repressing such conflict, the liberal arts college needs to be open with it. Students will almost always attest that honesty is a refreshing and sympathetic quality to find in an authority figure. After all, students are accustomed to feeling lied to throughout most of their lives so far, especially in high school education. If college can present to them an honest front that does not hide conflict but exhibits it, students will be more likely to believe in visions of change and improvement, possibly even engaging

with the school to make it happen. After all, "individual pedagogy alone can have only limited effects when it conflicts with institutional structure," (Graff, 10). As said in my introduction, the small reforms I did at my Honors College resulted from a year of frustrated discussion among fellow students wherein we assumed the professors were too distant to realize any of our complaints when they were in fact dealing with the same issues almost every day. Once I discovered this reality through honesty, it became an opportunity for me and several other students to finally channel our repressed critical energies into an institution that actually reacted to us. If even seemingly progressive educators continue the pattern of "maintain[ing] order at all costs" then "[b]ourgeois values in the classroom [will] create a barrier, blocking the possibility of confrontation and conflict, warding off dissent," (hooks, 179).

As hooks reports, this opening of conflict is not always easy to accomplish. This breach in silence is often seen as a breach of safety: "[m]any professors have conveyed to me their feeling that the classroom should be a 'safe' place; that usually translates to mean that the professor lectures to a group of quiet students who respond only when they are called on. The experience of professors who educate for critical consciousness indicates that many students, especially students of color, may not feel at all 'safe' in what appears to be a neutral setting. It is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or lack of student engagement," (hooks, 39). hooks reveals here that as dominant classes, especially white ones, assume politically neutral stances and what they presume to be "safe" ones, they are not often safe for oppressed students. Any idea of safety, just as ideas of tradition and peace and conservative unity, is an ideological foreclosure that assumes a blinded past is a universal present. What seems safe to a

dominant class is almost always unsafe to an oppressed class. As always, "no education is politically neutral," (hooks, 37) and every decision must be confronted as a politically active choice. This is of course, not a comfortable stance but in the theme of honesty, this too can be revealed: "that there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. And I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause," (hooks, 43). Sharing conflict with students invites them into an intersubjective communal engagement with the project of learning.

Conflict is then a primary way to engage students not as passive objects of learning but as active subject learners. Though an active pedagogy as far as content is certainly necessarily, instituting a reactive institution is essential to making this activity stick. Otherwise, the student will rightly perceive that supposedly student centered discussions are merely tangential to an institution that does not care for them. Ron Scapp says further (in a dialogue with bell hooks) that the "traditional notion of being in the classroom is a teacher behind a desk or standing at the front, immobilized. In a weird way that recalls the firm, immobilized body of knowledge as part of the immutability of truth itself," (hooks, 137). For knowledge to be seen as mutable, the teacher and the structure must be seen that way as well. The classroom will merely be a superfluous game relative to the institutional structure, further enhancing the prospects that cynical students will disengage and passionate students will find an unreactive classroom that may swallow them too in cynicism.

Humanizing the Institution

It is an understandable temptation to rest on conservative and traditional rhetoric for the power it once had: "many teachers who do not have difficulty releasing old ideas, embracing new ways of thinking, may still be as resolutely attached to old ways of *practicing teaching* as their more conservative colleagues," (hooks, 142). We have to come to grips with the fact however, that the humanities will always be tangential to a market reality. Even the vast counter cultural movement in the 60s only resulted in reforms rather than radical change, so unless we can somehow surpass that power, we will remain superfluous. In this uncertain and precarious state, we have to take risks. We have to take leaps of faith and trust in students.

What this institutional development should do is begin the process of engaging the student in a humanized social dialectic. If society in the form of this institution can reveal itself to be an artificial, malleable, human entity through its willingness to respond, converse, react, and change, the students should respond with growing humanities of their own. This is hampered however, by a history of marketized neoliberal education that prefers to treat them as products, a process that subsumes such things as critical thinking: "[c]ritical thinking is an interactive process, one that demands participation on the part of teacher and students alike. In fact, most students resist the critical thinking process; they are more comfortable with learning that allows them to remain passive. Critical thinking requires all participants in the classroom process to be engaged," (hooks, 9). Without interactivity, critical thinking dies as a one sided process, as something distant and unengaged. Engagement is then a precondition of criticality, which itself needs some form of excitement and passion.

I still believe that with diligence, these walls of cynicism and detachment can be broken down. Though students are accustomed to being treated like products, they are still enmeshed in an education system that has been shuffling them around in ways that force them to adapt and change. They have changed schools numerous times, taken a variety of courses, dealt with multiple authority figures, and continually deal with change. Though they are not the most well equipped critical thinkers, they are still much more developmentally open than an adult that has already been reduced to drudgery.

Higher education is a unique space in which to consecrate the student into adulthood by exposing them to an institution that should finally treat them as fully capable human adults that are worth something to them, not merely as passive investments but as active co-creators. "Rather than focusing on issues of safety, I think that a feeling of community creates a sense that there is shared commitment and a common good that binds us. What we all ideally share is the desire to learn-to receive actively knowledge that enhances our intellectual development and our capacity to live more fully in the world," (hooks, 40). Though conflict becomes a site of engagement, the source of energy for this co-creation is from the community. Safety can then be attained through the communal effort to tie people not to the institution but to each other. Conflict can then become a source of community and commonality. The institution can become more human too as it opens up in the surrounding geographical community, ensuring the walls of the institutions open up into doors that engage the students in the outside world and others with the institution.

By humanizing the student in this way, the institution will itself be humanized; humanization itself a dialectic process, so both sides must be continually engaged. One of

the structural ideologies passed through the background of history is that of pretending the educational institution to be a united authoritarian edifice rather than a human, conflicted, and social site of discursive educational practices. Even as students struggle with other things, their alienation will be lessened if they feel capable of changing the institution.

Hypothetically, as students from other departments engage in such an environment, they will bring home to their departments a desire to see this replicated. Students have a constant desire to be treated with respect, and, especially considering their youth, they want to be treated like adults. If humanities education is willing to treat them in a mature fashion that other departments don't, students will become more likely to demand it as they are exposed to it. As said before, students are accustomed to abuse and alienation, but if a liberal arts program exposes them to departments that do not engage in such tactics, that show them the possibility of a different kind of education, they will demand it. For students, there is a radical potential in reversed alienation. The further you stretch someone from their humanity, the stronger they will snap back once they realize what they're missing out on. As hooks says: "it is crucial that critical thinkers who want to change our teaching practices talk to one another, collaborate in a discussion that crosses boundaries and creates a space for intervention," (hooks, 129). Interdisciplinary discussion is necessary for changing the university as a whole. To humanize the institution and the students, both sets need to realize that narrow specialization can only stunt their growths. Everyone will benefit from a communal perspective of co-development. No subject should be expected to take on knowledge itself, but must understand that it and the students taking it are pieces of a communal,

intersubjective labor.

Solidarity in content

By dismantling this structure, the content within will be similarly humanized, but this still needs its own radical revision, because students must engage in the content before they are willing to engage in the structure. Before we even arrive at pedagogy, we must continue the work of diversifying all content among intersectional lines of oppression. The efforts to then diversify literature programs with other kinds of writers and widen the scope of historical studies to give silenced voices time to speak are certainly not wasted efforts. Representation is always an important fight to be had.

In the analysis of culture, we discussed how individuals articulate themselves from a social language so even and especially as we are immersed in popular media culture, if such minority groups do not see themselves in their culture, they do not have adequate spaces to articulate themselves: “[w]hen those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you…when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing. It takes some strength of soul—and not just individual strength but collective understanding—to resist this void, this non-being, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard," (Rich). Higher education, if it wants to be progressive, must at the very least fulfill this effort to diversify their education. Such efforts should be supported, and similar external efforts to actually maintain and improve minority students entering college should just as well be supported.

As Junot Diaz describes,

> "You guys know about vampires? You know, vampires have no reflections in a mirror? There's this idea that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. And what I've always thought isn't that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. It's that if you want to make a human being into a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves. And growing up, I felt like a monster in some ways. I didn't see myself reflected at all. I was like, 'Yo, is something wrong with me? That the whole society seems to think that people like me don't exist?' And part of what inspired me, was this deep desire that before I died, I would make a couple of mirrors. That I would make some mirrors so that kids like me might seem themselves reflected back and might not feel so monstrous for it," (Diaz).

It is the oppressed student that is most likely to feel dehumanized so it is they that most need to feel represented and worthy of inclusion. They most need to feel a sense of solidarity with what they engage in.

Further, it is the oppressed that will have the most radical potential to reverse oppression if consciousness of it can be adequately raised. bell hooks instructs how the specific inclusion of black vernacular can be a transgressive force, a reflection that can apply to the general inclusion and empowering of sub cultures: "[t]he power of this speech is not simply that it enables resistance to white supremacy, but that it also forges a space for alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies–different ways of thinking and knowing that were crucial to creating a counter-hegemonic worldview," (171). With consciousness raised and capabilities taught, it is the oppressed that will best be able to constitute a revolutionary perspective. They already live within marginalized spaces, so if this is brought to the fore, they will best be able to make new and counter-hegemonic spaces in society.

But we must, as Paulo Freire reminds us, treat these students as people before we treat them as teachable entities. They are not unique tools to be fetishized but people that we must treat as such as we raise their consciousnesses. They are not oppressed to being animals or machines, requiring animal or machine teaching to humanize them; students

must always be treated as humans because that is the only way to humanize them, to raise them to the point of demanding a context that allows for their further development. These students will also constitute the most radical critiques because they are at a deeper level of immanent interpellation. The boring out in immanent critique will necessarily be from a deeper core, making it more productive at reaching the root.

Of course, it is not only the most oppressed that need consciousness raising, but if we are to reverse the trend of merely applying equal standards to unequal conditions, then we must put effort into equalizing those conditions by focusing on the students that need it the most. And as said before, this consciousness raising is not to be envisioned as an elevation of the student to a transcendent or emancipatory level. This consciousness raising is less an ascension and more a widening and deepening, a process of examining one's connections to social reality, becoming more open minded, caring, empathetic, and aware of one's context and social determination. Raising consciousness is not compromised just of external learning but internal, by not just becoming conscious but self-conscious.

In this way, the humanities will take charge of the mission in its name, that of humanizing students. The mission of this education will not be transporting students to a higher plane but developing them in a way that widens and deepens their consciousness and self-consciousness. This education will not sever connections as they ascend but make them aware of ones that they have used all their lives and develop their ability to create more connections as they grow not just as individuals but as citizens, community members, and instances of a collective humanity. Though the most difficult process of this might be the first step of making students conscious of themselves not as isolated

individuals but as social articulations, the most ambitious vision of the process would be to engage them in an ever widening discourse that subsumes not only the campus, their community, their nation, the world, but all of history. Ideally, students would begin the process of learning to see themselves as an instance of the grand uncaused history, as an instance of a totality. Of course, this cannot be engaged in a purely or even majorly content way; there is simply too much, and the sheer amount of information would overwhelm them into cynical detachment. Students must instead use ideology against itself and engage in the history that survives by way of structure. The first major step of this will be done by engaging them in institutional co-creation, revealing structure and their engagement in it to be something malleable and human, as something that is socially constituted. The next will be to constitute the ability to structurally allow all kinds of content into this education in a flexible manner, in a way that will keep the material modern and challenging.

Engagement as precondition

The beginning of this kind of engagement will necessarily begin immanently with the teaching at hand. As always, further progressive and radical education must work from within society, as immanent critics maintaining and reforming progressive acts that have already been made. Perhaps it is my innocence and lack of vision as a student, but with a focus on subversion and practicality, I still see potential within what would seem to be a fairly traditional humanities classroom. What would be retained is the general format of the class with the professor as head and the students as members of a discussion with the text at the center. This has formal potential, but the vision needs to be radically changed in order to constitute the seeds of something radical.

As implied before, the shift should be to engaging the student as an active co-creator of knowledge, not just in terms of curriculum but in terms of learning as well. Professors must learn to define themselves not as the knowledgeable one opposing the students' ignorance, but as the more experienced co-creator. This is a welcoming, almost familiar process of enfolding students into the co- creation of meaning. To do this, professors will have to learn how to absolutely respect their students' voice in all senses, along gender, race, and class lines as well as in a general human sense. We must remember that even when dealing with the silent, "[t]here is really no such thing as the 'voiceless', there is only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard" (Roy), silence thus signaling marginalization and oppression. It is then a transgressive act to help these students come to voice, to learn to articulate themselves, not only in a culture that oppresses them but in a classroom environment that encourages, welcomes, and cultivates them. Similarly, students in general have been smothered into passivity, so voice itself, as long as it opens up into other voices as well, is inherently worthwhile.

Students must also be engaged in an environment that cultivates and encourages them, one that deals heavily in terms of excitement rather than detachment. It is too often assumed, with latent positivist tendencies, that true learning is only occurring with quiet, stone faced students, and cold discussions. Passion, happiness, laughing, sadness, fury, and emotions in general are invalidated. They are not treated as signs of engagement but as illegitimate, inappropriate behaviors, as things to be corrected. As bell hooks shows, excitement actually contains elements of transgressive radicalism:

> *"Excitement* in higher education was viewed as potentially disruptive of the atmosphere of seriousness assumed to he essential to the learning process. To enter classroom settings in colleges and universities with the will to share the desire to encourage excitement was to transgress. Not only did it require

> movement beyond accepted boundaries, but excitement could not be generated without a full recognition of the fact that there could never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices. Agendas had to be flexible, had to allow for spontaneous shifts in direction," (7).

If we are to humanize students, we must engage them holistically and wholly as human beings in the forms of intellectual, emotional, and bodily engagement. As Dewey long ago said, we must educate the whole student or we risk, as Marx said, fracturing them to be sold piecemeal into the market as alienated laborers. This is necessarily transgressive because, as hooks goes on to say: "[e]xcitement is generated through collective effort," (hooks, 8). To generate this collective excitement, this communal passion, the professor must both model it and participate in it: "most students at every level of the academic system will rise to the challenge to learn. But they will strive only if they are convinced the professor is there beside them and has equal dedication, something far more valuable than charisma," (Aronowitz, 193). "Co-creation" is not a buzz term but is a practice that must be deeply engaged by the professor for the students to also participate in this dialogic system.

Importantly, this absolutely does not mean a lessening in rigor. It may appear so, but if, as literature teachers, as history teachers, as philosophy teachers, we can remember a text that has moved us, brought us to tears, made us shake with anger, then we can remember that this not easy. Especially in the modern environment of alienation, distraction, and cynicism, the effort it takes to actually bring emotion to the fore is an incredible display of empathic ability that should not be discouraged. That being said, the classroom is not a place to air grievances and rap about emotional difficulties. It is centrally and fundamentally a place for development, and this must still be headed by the will of the intellectual mind. We must simply engage this mind on all levels rather than

privileging certain pieces.

Engaging all elements of the students will also involve the content restructuring of not merely recycling the traditional canon but focusing on an inclusion that will actively engage the student. This means bringing in elements of popular culture and modern literature, as well as supplementing older pieces with modern perspectives. Before the outcry gets too loud, this is not an effort to make things more "relatable", because the effort of education should not be to make students comfortable but uncomfortable in a space of challenge, a bid that demands them to stretch beyond themselves: "[t]he engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself," (hooks, 11). The student must always be ready, always willing to learn how to change itself in order to make discourse possible.

Including context and conflict

Still, students need to cross historical divides and modernization can do a lot to help that. Classical literature should never be introduced as isolated pieces of mastery but as elements of a process in progress, as pieces generated by human history. This inclusion of context in teaching must too remember "[a] context is always a construction rather than some objective truth lying in wait for the critic or reader to discover, and the decision about what qualifies as a 'context' is never disinterested," (Newman, 28). The inclusion of context is then never politically neutral either but must be designed with a certain direction, a purpose I recommend being that of understanding social production.

Students should not be airlifted into isolated islands of history but immersed in enough historical context to see how these pieces were created and the social language available at the time to articulate such a thing. Through this contextual history, lines can

be drawn from those times to now that connect the concerns those historical persons had to ours. These efforts are not bland, superficial attempts to make Shakespeare hip but are to widen the context of his writings so that students can understand he was dealing with similar social problems. If anything, canonical texts require a special effort, the

> "illusion or appearance of isolation or autonomy which a printed text projects must now be systematically undermined. Indeed, since by definition the cultural monuments and masterworks that have survived tend necessarily to perpetuate only a single voice in this class dialogue, the voice of a hegemonic class, they cannot be properly assigned their relational place in a dialogical system without the restoration or artificial reconstruction of the voice to which they were initially opposed, a voice for the most part stifled and reduced to silence, marginalized, its own utterances scattered to the winds, or reappropriated in their turn by the hegemonic culture," (Jameson, 85).

Canonical texts have largely survived by the oppression and repression of the multiplicities of contradictions within them, so a special effort must be made to retexualize them, to open them up once again as human texts made in meaningfully human ways.

To actually complete such a historical understanding, the canon will have to be stretched to include distinctly modern works as well. If we are to legitimate the problems in the past we must also validate the problems students face now. If we are to engage our students as historical subjects, we need to engage them in a discourse that spans across temporal restraints. This not only means giving them the ability to empathize across time and space but to connect such historical struggles to their modern ones by creating a space that allows for both of their legitimacies. If modern students are to engage in historical discourse, then their modern texts should also be put in context with historical texts. Students must be immersed in a study that is not merely past-focused but discourse focused, a historical discourse that encompasses history as a totality with students that

can actively engage in it as co-creators of this discourse.

Further, Jameson shows that this history is in fact inaccessible without this discourse: "history is not a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious," (Jameson, 35). To access history, one must use the texts it leaves behinds which sediment society within themselves. For the student, as Jameson warns: "if the modern reader is bored or scandalized by the roots such texts send down into the contingent circumstances of their own historical time, this is surely testimony as to his resistance to his own political unconscious and to his denial (in the United States, the denial of a whole generation) of the reading and the writing of the text of history within himself," (Jameson, 34). The students must confront the texuality of the texts so that the students can confront their own textuality.

Within this discourse, we cannot merely enhance narratives but encourage the intersection of counter narratives, in a sense creating conflict where there wasn't open tension before. In this way, students will have narratives they previously relied on questioned by narratives of other peoples. While this is certainly meant to be disruptive, it is not meant to be purely destructive. The overall goal of this is the creation of a critical discourse that encompasses ever-growing swathes of humanity. According to Spivak, "the task of the educator is to learn to learn from below, the lines of conflict resolution undoubtedly available, however dormant, within the disenfranchised cultural system," (Spivak, 551). Transcendence, authority, emancipation, and individualism must be relented to reach the dormant radicalism of oppressed peoples.

Rather than relying on narratives that are disseminated from a dominant culture, ideas that come from a dominant group, we must proliferate a multiplicity of counter narratives. Limited narratives, both in scope, inclusion, and variance contribute to oppression. As alluded to before, the American Dream narrative, for instance, is one of the few ways we are told to explain the success of a rich person. When looking at a wealthy banker, we are encouraged to reach for this narrative that explains his wealth in a fashion that supports market ideology, namely, that he got his wealth purely by his own effort. The narratives made available to us only explain in a manner that supports conservative common sense and dominant ideology. We must cultivate counter narratives that defy this limited explanation. Similarly, on the opposite end, dominant culture only supplies us with a limited set of narratives to explain poverty, namely, ones that blame the individual for being lazy or stupid. Again, counter narratives must be brought in that show different stories, different explanations that are also valid. A special focus must be brought on people that are entirely erased, on people that don't have narratives to represent them and so have no space from which to articulate themselves. Due to being entirely marginalized from the wider set of recognized narratives, structural violence can be invisibly implemented that normalizes and institutes their oppression. These conflicting sets of narratives can be accessed through texts and through the co-created meanings read from them.

To make this accessible, the text must not be presented as a united front and neither should the interpretations. Students are to be co-creators not only of the external discussion but the internal meaning of what is being read. As Jameson shows, texts are actually constituted by the ideological resolution of material contradictions, so if society

is to be taught through the text, "[t]he aim of a properly structural interpretation or exegesis thus becomes the explosion of the seemingly unified text into a host of clashing and contradictory elements," (56). In the words of Adorno, "art is [...] the truth of society insofar as in its most authentic products the irrationality of the rational world order is expressed," (84). Through art and its interpretation, the fundamental irrationality of contradictions can be studied.

Textual direction

With all of this going on in a sort of vastly abstract democracy, we must, as John Dewey says, find direction. This direction must be constituted by the texts. Students cannot be expected to engage in this discourse fully from the beginning, so texts will be useful as introductory materials to this kind of analysis, foundations for this criticism, spaces for discussion, and centering points for focused labor. Rather than spinning off into conversation about anything and everything, students must be engaged in work that focuses on understanding and interpreting texts. Though discussion is important, its primary use is to bring to the fore a collective effort of understanding. True textual understanding requires a transgressive focus for, as Benjamin says: "[a] man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. […] In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art," (239). Understanding requires the suspension of self in the immersion of the text, resistance to commodity capitalism's addiction to absorbing things as products.

The texts are to be the mediators of discussion, the central and common lived experience through which other experiences can be discursively reflected and refracted. The students constitute the discussion around and through the text while the professor

facilitates. This is an active role that, when done well, becomes less involved as time goes on. As Readings say,

> "[i]n order to open up the question of pedagogy we do not need, therefore, to recenter teaching but to decenter it. By the decentering of the pedagogic situation I mean to insist that teaching is not best understood from the point of view of a sovereign subject that takes itself to be the sole guarantor of the meaning of that process, whether that subject is the student, the teacher, or the administrator. Decentering teaching begins with an attention to the pragmatic scene of teaching. This is to refuse the possibility of any privileged point of view so as to make teaching something other than the self-reproduction of an autonomous subject," (153).

There is then never a transaction of reproduction or an emancipation from such structures but a free decentering that focuses the students on creating meaning as a collective, placing the text in the center not as an authority of meaning but a locus of meaning creation.

The texts must be understood as historical human acts, not isolated strokes of divine genius. Further, "[a]rtworks have the immanent character of being an act, even if they are carved in stone, and this endows them with the quality of being something momentary and sudden. […] Under patient contemplation, artworks begin to move," (Adorno, 79). The artwork is an act unto itself, not an ideal object or a holy text but a human act objectified from moment to moment as an appearance by a conscious interpreter. Students must be taught not to unearth some core transcendent meaning or authorial intention but to patiently contemplate, as Adorno says, until the art too takes on the aspect of its humanity and begins to move. It is once art has been freed, become nomadic in its internal and eternal history, that art can open viewers up to their social consciousness. The art itself is objectified but it appears differently to every viewer, thus opening each viewer up to the perspectives of the other. Texts are then perfect mediators

of discussions because they should, with the right approach, open students up to each other. The professor can guide this study, but the students must constitute it because they must fundamentally open up to each other and open up to all that is in the text.

The professor should not rule over the discussion but is a necessary authority for keeping things on track and retaining focus. Professors can also equalize and democratize education by clarifying points students make, summarizing positions, collating reactions, and ensuring that all voices are heard and respected, especially those oppressed along gender and race lines. Of course, the professor must also be the one to provide contextual detail and organize the discussions that will be held. Importantly, tests and essays will also have to be retained, not just to fit into traditional educational structure but to enforce the rigor of asking a student to learn from a discussion but also translate and individuate that knowledge through their own reflective work.

Grading must then be engaged not as an external force of authority and subjugation but as a marker of progress. Grades should beckon students onward rather than drag them forward or push them down. They must also not represent an inflexible and inhuman authority but mend themselves with the situation: "[a] more flexible grading process must go hand in hand with a transformed classroom. Standards must always be high. Excellence must be valued, but standards cannot be absolute and fixed," (hooks, 157). To humanize the grading procedure, it too must be transformed to something historical, active, and malleable.

The discussion dialectic

Within the discussion itself, students must engage generally in that process of consciousness widening, but specifically in a dialectic of critical and creative thinking.

Both modes have been partially commodified, but their authentic forms, especially when put into conversation with each other, still have radical potential. Adorno correctly says that "[s]ociety […] constitutes artworks as their true subject," (86) and under that banner, so is it the true subject of history and philosophy. Students must dialectically engage with society with texts as mediators, as models of society. Texts are, after all, in Adorno's terms, sedimented layers of society, and in Jameson's, ideological resolutions to material societal contradictions. Untying the text not only teaches the valuable methodology of analyzing society but goes a good way toward direct analysis of society itself: "[h]istory is the content of artworks. To analyze artworks means no less than to become conscious of the history immanently sedimented in them," (Adorno, 85). Because of this, while contextual information must constantly be streamed in, the direction of the discussion must always be toward understanding the text itself. The society it represents must certainly be critiqued, but the text must be understood before this critique means anything.

Critical thinking is certainly an essential value but an exclusive focus on it brings what Jacques Ranciére calls "police-reason" wherein "[t]he apprentices of bourgeois knowledge are trained in a universe of discourse where words, arguments, ways of questioning, deduction are prescribed by the discursive forms – forms which are those of the repressive practices of power," (11). This involves a harsh reason that only engages in the *"interrogation* of concepts, demanding their *authorization*, questioning their *identity*, restraining those which without a passport wandered out of their *proper province*…" (11). This kind of criticality actually detaches students from the text, giving the illusion of engagement when what is actually being enacted is a cynical, dismissive,

criticism that does not productively take from the text but merely pushes it away. This translates into interpersonal discussion that privileges disagreements over agreements. In this fashion, criticality is pretended when discussion is reduced to a pure relativism that settles everyone into their own unchangeable opinions. True criticality requires the creativity of seeking agreement despite critical disagreements. Through this, students will not be able to detach but must actually construct and defend their arguments rather than merely settling into them.

Students must then be tasked not just with a negative influence over the text but a positive one, a creative one. Creativity completes the dialectic of thinking by complimenting critique with use. What is gathered from the text should not merely be swept up but actively used to understand other things. Again, this can reflect back on contextual information as well as students' lived experiences, but it must also be put into conversation with other texts. This kind of education greatly suffers when texts are fragmented from each other, so they must individually and collectively be put into wider conversations with the students and themselves. "The type of interpretation here proposed is more satisfactorily grasped as the rewriting of the literary text in such a way that the latter may itself be seen as the rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological subtext," (Jameson, 81). The text must be opened and rewritten into multiplicities of conversations, including conversations with its own subtext, its context, and its metatextual theory.

Essential to this dialectic as well as any other, is the focus on movement and contradiction rather than metaphysical stagnation. While discourses do enact stable structural consequences, they are also always on the move, so students must learn to keep

up. The text is then a moment in a standstill, to be engaged with as a temporary cessation of movement. As Marcel Proust so lovingly described, the happy discovery of the novelist (and other writers) is the ability to slow down lived experience into a textual form that can be re-experienced and thus analyzed.

> "A 'real' person, profoundly as we my sympathize with him, is in a great measure perceptible only through our senses, that is to say, he remains opaque, offers a dead weight which our sensibilities have not the strength to lift. [...] The novelist's happy discovery was to think of substituting for those opaque sections, impenetrable by the human spirit, their equivalent in immaterial sections, things, that is, which the spirit can assimilate to itself. After which it matters not the actions, the feelings of this new order of creatures appear to us in the guise of truth, since we have made them our own, since it is in ourselves that they are happening, that they are holding in thrall, while we turn over, feverishly, the pages of the book, our quickened breath and staring eyes. And once the novelist has brought us to that state, in which, as in all purely mental states, every emotion is multiplied tenfold, into which his book comes to disturb us as might a dream, but a dream more lucid, and of a more lasting impression than those which come to us in sleep; why, then, for the space of an hour he sets free within us all the joys and sorrows in the world, a few of which, only, we should have to spend years of our actual life in getting to know, and the keenest, the most intense of which would never have been revealed to us because the slow course of their development stops our perception of them. It is the same in life; the heart changes, and that is our worst misfortune; but we learn of it only from reading or by imagination; for in reality it alteration, like that of certain natural phenomena, is so gradual that, even if we are able to distinguish, successively, each of its different states, we are still spared the actual sensation of change," (Proust, 72).

This analysis, in its critical creativity must then engage in both its movement and its stability, learning to leave the text necessarily incomplete. Analysis does not end but is merely stopped. If the text were arrived at later again in life or in a different context, its nomadic meaning would have moved. Students must accept their interpretations with a confident humility that respects partial understanding rather than reducing the text to a discrete number of meanings to be ingested.

Bold humility and radical empathy

These discussions will stoke students toward understanding what I call a bold

humility that asks students to bravely take on their own limitations. This is a worthwhile trait to encourage that involves bluntly accepting one's limitations as an individual in a social realm, as necessarily being limited to one's own experiences. This kind of humility would not only allow but encourage listening to other people's voices. Importantly, this listening, especially in a discussion setting, can't merely be a passive silence, a waiting for a turn to speak. It has to be an active assimilation of what is being said with constructive responses that prove said listening. If a classroom is to become exciting and in so doing generate passion and engagement, it must first set the conditions of listening.

> "As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence. Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor, any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be simply stated. It has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices," (hooks, 8).

In order for this to work, students must learn to be humble enough to accept other people's experiences and incorporate them into the discussion.

Professors can model this too by listening attentively to all voices and validating them through repetition and constructive discussion. In fact, professors too must specifically and attentively acknowledge the listening required of them in order to engage with "[t]hinking along with a new generation, being moved by their concerns and introducing them into ours. A present of humility borne in a relationship of listening, reflecting, and judging. There is no room here for vanguardism, no place to tell others that they must be what we tell them to be; instead there is a space that recognizes how I am bound to and separated from others in a complicated drama of which I do not know the final act," (Todd, 82). As hooks says: "[j]ust the physical experience of hearing, of

listening intently, to each particular voice strengthens our capacity to learn together," (hooks, 186). Listening is an essential, even fundamental part of building communities of learning.

Another trait that can be cultivated through intersubjective text-based discussions is what I call a radical empathy. This is an empathy that crosses mere sympathetic boundaries wherein something is only "relatable." Students often refer to relatability as a requirement for texts, but it often relents from anything demanding and simply presents situations that are immediately relevant without any need for reflection. A radical empathy would demand the student cross greater distances in time, space, history, culture, and identity to actually empathize with a person as if one could live as they do. As the artist Artur Zmijewski says about art, though it applies too to humanities education that centrally uses art, “the ethical challenge is to activate your empathy” because in this marketized world, we are taught to “need indifference and distance. We are trained to keep our distance. That’s why it is easy to be passive when you see people suffer. These are the qualities that capitalism encourages in order to “live successfully” (4), so we must teach students in an opposite fashion. This must be a process that humanizes them in order to reach across such distances in order to feel for and with the other across boundaries that capitalism has cleaved.

Of course, one must constantly be aware that there is an uncrossable limit to this action because one can never understand the entirety of another's history but despite the impossibility, because of it even, students and professors must leap anyway. We must remain especially conscious of various intersecting lines of oppression, such as race, gender, and sexuality, but complete empathy will remain the impossible goal to

ultimately seek. While we may have a utopian desire for a humanity that is not fractured by these faults of oppression, we must also remember that, materially, these oppressions still exist and we cannot pretend this utopia has arrived simply because we want it to, as if we can already eliminate these divides. To ignore this reality would be to subsume difference, even with good intentions, and continue a pattern of marginalization that ignores the different lived realities that coexist, the different narratives that constitute this collective text.

Importantly, these patterns of thinking, though best realized in discussions, are not exclusive to this format. Such things as excitement, humility, and empathy are all capable of being cultivated within other formats as well, including the lecture. It will be harder to ensure active engagement on the part of the student so at least supplemental discussions are always worthwhile, but more information-based lectures can provide a useful piece too.

The Maintenance of Knowledge

Radical empathy and bold humility both take part in inherently anti-capitalist action because they engage in knowledge maintenance rather than knowledge accrual. In the market, knowledge can only be valued as an object to be acquired, as a commodity that can be circulated for profit. The circuit of accumulation transplants itself here too and learning becomes a process of pure accumulation.

Radical empathy and bold humility subvert this process by finding their value not in writing but in revision. A perspective involving maintenance engages a fuller realization of humanity, not merely focusing on what one can make but on what one can develop within oneself. People's development, their humanities, are stunted in the dialectic of the market, wherein humanity is reduced to an ideological resolution between

identity and culture that only legitimates identity as commodity and culture as market. Maintenance engages in a subversive process that this withered resolution to widen and deepen itself, to not merely be satisfied with mere production but enliven the dialectic with revision. Humanity is not something to be produced and set aside or sold but is something that must be continually developed, something that must be continually maintained and improved.

Further, especially in the conflict of narratives, the humanities can engage in a process of unlearning coupled with learning. Unlearning is a process fundamentally counter to capitalist agenda because it not only involves effort tangential to the market but effort that undoes work the market has done. In unlearning, students use empathy and humility to begin the process of reconstructing themselves first by taking apart what used to be there. For white male students, this most often involves the gradual stripping of patriarchal and colonial influences that been inculcated in them since birth. For oppressed students, it requires the unlearning of subjugated identities that have been implanted into them by dominant societies. Both paths involve the peeling back of taut layers of identity, culture, and ideology, the excavation of sedimented layers of being. Students must to learn to realize themselves as social beings, as figures that cannot purely transmit intentions through actions but must take heed of their effects. Most white students would not connect their actions to racist effects because they don't intend it, but through training in self-consciousness, they can see how effects ripple out socially despite intentions. Upon learning this, they can begin the laborious process of untying the gnarled ideological narratives that had made them ignorant. They must unlearn patterns, disrupt repetition, and break out into new understandings.

Unlearning is a revolutionary process of tracing the dialectic back, following it and untying it where it is found to be ideologically resolved. It is only with unlearning that students can open themselves up to further learning. Learning cannot merely be a process of acquisition but also be a process of continuous re-creation. Students must be able to learn something but also be able to unlearn something, learn around something problematic, rescind knowledge that used to be held dear, relinquish beliefs, admit ignorance, and ultimately, open themselves up to knowledge. It is only on this basis that thought can advance.

Rethinking Thought

At the core of this work, the cell around which these methods grow is a focus on thought, perhaps even Thought with a capital T. As analyzed beforehand, marketization reduces the student, knowledge, and thought itself to a commodified process of profit production. The mind is streamlined in favor or capital circulation, anything tangential to that being sloughed off as superfluous. Reality itself is honed to the market, the corresponding contiguity making them appear one and the same. The mind follows suit as personal and cultural narratives are hewn to a shape meant to fit into the market, facets that don't fit being sanded off as mere immature roughness. As Readings showed, what was ultimately a cultural battle for legitimacy has been reduced to a battle over thought itself. The ideological poles have moved, culture now becoming a conscious battleground, meaning ideology has withdrawn to something deeper, a struggle over the very definition and limit of thought.

Thought was certainly ideologically foreclosed beforehand, but within meta-cultural theory, thought was a requirement for cultural judgment and it was often an

implicit consequence of reading classic texts, even if the major goal was for interpersonal superiority. Now, however, as marketization becomes the primary reality of education, thought itself is reduced to merely being the building blocks of marketability. Education has been reduced to initiating the student not in a wider range of thinking but a narrower one. Students don't have their minds opened but closed, as they learn to shape themselves into commodities, relent on their dreams and ambitions, and define their humanity by their marketability.

The market model has replaced the cultural model, but it still retains a roughly similar hierarchy of motion with cultural accrual being replaced by wealth accrual. In the culture model, the high culture was vaunted and low culture was explicitly detested, with sub cultures being repressed and silently marginalized. High culture defined itself against low culture, but sub culture was excluded from the document entirely. When sub cultures eventually constituted a cultural revolution in the 60s, it turned into a cultural civil war because the inclusion of sub cultures in the normal cultural paradigm does not constitute a mere reform but has the incendiary potential of radically restructuring culture as a whole and meta cultural theory. Ultimately, market reality constituted itself as a base and became impossible to surmount, but radical potential still translated into important changes.

Though this will not of course constitute the whole of a revolutionary praxis, I believe a similar effort can be made on the behalf of thought itself. Similarly, wealth defines itself against poverty, a simpler negation and a vaster one as shown by current material wealth inequality. Wealth is associated with intelligence, success, happiness, and life while poverty us associated with stupidity, failure, depression, and death. Like sub

cultures, thought in the theoretical forms of criticality, creativity, empathy, and humility and in the practical forms of subversiveness, collectivity, communality, and revolutionary action, is repressed as tangential. What remains can hardly be called thought. To contrast them, thought is certainly less capable of making itself visible than sub culture and it is more ideologically entrenched. Struggling on behalf of it will be less able to constitute a visible cultural war but will need to function as more of a subversive force.

This is not an idle difference but is in fact a difference created by fragmentation. Neoliberal ideology thrives by fracturing people from raising collective consciousness so cultural consciousness will certainly be made less possible. Still, they are nefariously allowed as long as it conforms to marketized thinking. Any culture, any kind of person can be valuable and worthwhile in modern society, as long as they know how to make a buck. Thinking that differs from this market process is now what is more distinctly repressed. Groups can collect and move as they see fit, but they are all disabled from thinking in a critical and creative fashion. Material collectives are useless when they are incapable of forming theoretical collectives.

Through textual and collective social immersion, students must learn the radical value of thinking. It is only through a radical form of thinking that students will be able to re-think enough to question structural ideology; only then will they become self-conscious enough to understand the society that limits them. Combatting ideology must fundamentally begin as an educative act.

The greatest limitation, as of anything in capitalism, is the inherent risk of such efforts being commodified and neutralized. Critical and creative thinking are already largely commodified. This process smothers and neutralizes any political edge so must be

continually resisted. At all points, thinking must always predominate over thought, meaning that thought in a mobile, malleable, nomadic form must be sought over thought in a stable, stagnant, settled form. Thinking must be valued over thought, engagement over apathy, questions over answers, activity over passivity, humanity over commodity, the dialectical over the metaphysical, and the relational over the singular. The subversive power in education is in resisting this commodification: "the transgressive force of teaching does not lie so much in matters of content as in the way pedagogy can hold open the temporality of questioning so as to resist being characterized as a transaction that can be concluded, either with the giving of grades or the granting of degrees," (Readings, 19). Thought must always be on the move so that commodification cannot reduce it to an object to be circulated for profit. Emphasis must be placed on thought's nomadic nature, on its ability to hold itself open as a question rather than merely settling into an answer. As Readings demands: "[n]o authority can terminate the pedagogic relation, no knowledge can save us the task of thinking," (Readings, 154).

John Dewey agrees in a certain sense as he requires democracy to be constantly remade, the meaning of equality not being merely set by a constitutional document but needing consistent updating. Thought and through it democracy must be constantly reasserted in the wake of new conditions. Through this and the continual effort to assert equalized conditions in the classroom, pedagogy takes on an ethical edge. According to Readings, pedagogy must be rephrased with

> "teaching and learning as sites of obligation, as loci of ethical practices, rather than as means for the transmission of scientific knowledge. Teaching thus becomes answerable to the question of justice, rather than to the criteria of truth. We must seek to do justice to teaching rather than to know what it is. A belief that we know what teaching is or should be is actually a major impediment to just teaching. Teaching should cease to be about merely the transmission of

> information and the emancipation of the autonomous subject, and instead should become a site of obligation that exceeds an individual's consciousness of justice," (154).

The ethical side of this teaching must then be irreducible to calculated transaction but still be held "accountable without accounting" to the ideal of thought and even more deeply, to the ideal of the thinking oppressed: "[t]he pedagogic effort that may bring about lasting epistemic change in the oppressed is never accurate, and must be forever renewed. Otherwise there does not seem much point in considering the Humanities worth teaching," (Spivak, 529). Calculable accuracy can never be the goal. Administration must be replaced with the meta-discursive ideal of justice.

Adding to our previous analyses of Graff including institutional conflict and Jameson learning by studying contradiction, Readings recommends "a self-conscious exposure of the emptiness of Thought that replaces vulgarity with honesty," wherein the content of thought too is honestly exposed as empty because it is constantly on the move. It cannot be strictly held down with one definition of meaning but must be always shifting between contexts, always shaping itself relationally and dialectically rather than settling itself. Further,

> "[k]eeping the question of what Thought names open requires a constant vigilance to prevent the name of Thought from slipping back into an idea, from founding a mystical ideology of truth. We can only seek to do justice to a name, not to find its truth. […] As a horizon, the name of Thought cannot be given a content with which consciousness might fuse, or a signification that would allow the closure of debate. Debate may occur as to its signification, but this will always be an agonistic contest of prescriptives about what Thought should be. Nothing in the nature of Thought, as a bare name, will legitimate any one or other of these accounts. To put this another way, any attempt to say what Thought should be must take responsibility for itself as such an attempt," (159).

Thought then, remains as thinking, and so, as Julia Hölzl explains: "[w]e must stay with the question, with the elsewhere, that is, for only from such elsewhere can the call for and

of thinking be answered. Thinking must be called forth, always; thinking, unlike thought, is an away, always, just as ‘to call’ means to set in motion, to get something underway,’"" (128).

In this way, the always moving, always resistant thought should be able to resist commodification and neutralization. Rather than centering education on a particular content idea, this theory would found education on a relation that by nature never defines itself in a settled enough way to be absorbed as a market value: "thinking remains to be thought, always" (Hölzl, 128).

"Thought is, in this sense, an empty transcendence, not one that can be worshiped and believed in, but one that throws those who participate in pedagogy back into a reflection upon the ungroundedness of their situation: their obligation to each other and to a name that hails them as addressees, before they can think about it," (Readings, 161). This theory then internalizes thought as an interpellation of one's subjecthood, making this social necessity an imperative of individual articulation. The ethical nature of pedagogy then surfaces as a need to constantly reflect upon the context of one's always shifting situation, the interpellated duty to one another in this historical struggle.

The call of thought as the call of the other

Though radical empathy and bold humility will forge connections between people, justice itself will demand "respect for an absolute Other, a respect that must precede any knowledge about the other," (Readings, 162). This Other is absolute in its historical social transcendence, in its ever-present nature as humanity before, around, and beyond. Thought in this sense can then humanize the student in relation to humanity as a whole. The student, by way of education, must do justice to humanity. This requires the

ability to think critically and creatively, relationally and discursively.

Through humanities education, students must learn the practice of "suspending oneself into the text of the other— for which the first condition and effect is a suspension of the conviction that I am necessarily better, I am necessarily indispensable, I am necessarily the one to right wrongs, I am necessarily the end product for which history happened, and that New York is necessarily the capital of the world," (Spivak, 532). Students must suspend themselves through textuality, with the Other being the literal and figurative text at the heart of the discussion. Art and text, as the core of the humanities, constitutes a uniquely equipped medium, a metaphor through which to channel such suspension. "The telos of artworks is a language whose words cannot be located on the spectrum, a language whose words are not imprisoned by a prestablized universality," (Adorno, 83). Art is itself always a historical human act, always transient, always nomadic, always different. It is this in focal point with a multiplicity of narratives coinciding through it that the self is suspended.

The ultimate precondition (which is also simultaneously the goal) of this work is the breaking up of reified ideology. Adorno, as one of many critics of modernism, worried that capital circulation reified reality into a circuit of accumulation. Ideas lose their stature as ideas, as instances of humanity, and become instrumental tools to be used, ideological structures that shape reality as objective. "Absolute reification, which presupposed intellectual progress as one of its elements, is now preparing to absorb the mind entirely. Critical intelligence cannot be equal to this challenge as long as it confines itself to self-satisfied contemplation," (Adorno, 210). With the ever-present threat of marketization ready to swallow up all that is not market, criticality cannot rest as

transcendent, as internal, as individualistic, but must be inescapably social.

Further, thought itself cannot rest at any moment but must be positioned relationally so that it can never be completely settled. In the humanities classroom, art must reassert itself as the text with ultimate centrality and take on itself as a moment at a standstill. As an instance of humanity, it is, like thought, ever moving and ever transient, but as art, it is a moment temporally objectified within the gaze of the other. Art then simultaneously makes every student and all reality other, but makes "[e]verything in [the artwork] become other," (Adorno, 81). Art can then stand in as the ultimate call of the other. What must be cultivated in students then, in Adorno's term, is the capacity to "shudder" within the gaze of this other as it interpellates them as ultimately being human and historical, being free and determined. He describes in detail these requirements:

> "Ultimately, aesthetic comportment is to be defined as the capacity to shudder, as if goose bumps were the first aesthetic image. What later came to be called subjectivity, freeing itself from the blind anxiety of the shudder, is at the same time the shudder's own development; life in the subject is nothing but what shudders, the reaction to the total spell that transcends the spell. Consciousness without shudder is reified consciousness. That shudder in which subjectivity stirs without yet being subjectivity is the act of being touched by the other. Aesthetic comportment assimilates itself to that other than subordinating it. Such a constitutive relation of the subject to objectivity in aesthetic comportment joins eros and knowledge," (Adorno, 331).

The viewers must suspend modern subjectivity and define themselves by the call of the other inherent in art, not to subsume it as an object but allow themselves to be swallowed in its gaze, and perhaps even gaze back. The shudder is that primordial feeling before subjectivity, the quaking of the embodied being that feels social determination and social reality before the crashing waves of consciousness. This is not a state that one can or should be in forever. Rather, people must have the capacity to momentarily free themselves from reification, never letting ideas solidify too much, so they can be

rethought and reconsidered. Like art, one must both be able to move and objectify oneself in material reality in order to act in it.

The absolute other then constitutes a site wherein one can suspend oneself and become self conscious of the structuring of society. We must learn that "[w]e are all subjects in history. We must return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way power has been traditionally orchestrated in the classroom, denying subjectivity to some groups and according it to others. By recognizing subjectivity and the limits of identity, we disrupt that objectification that is so necessary in a culture of domination," (hooks, 139). Students must then learn "to think beside each other and beside ourselves, […] to explore an open network of obligations that keeps the question of meaning open as a locus of debate. Doing justice to Thought, listening to our interlocutors, means trying to hear that which cannot be said but that which tries to make itself heard. And this is a process incompatible with the production of (even relatively) stable and exchangeable knowledge. Exploring the question of value means recognizing that there exists no homogeneous standard of value that might unite all poles of the pedagogical scene so as to produce a single scale of evaluation," (Readings, 165). This opens thought up to the intersubjective constitution of oppressed people by way of Freire, as students of all kinds are demanded to do justice to thought, and, through this, justice to people and to their own humanities.

Students must then take the leap of faith of engaging in thought and the suspension of the self in favor of the other. This requires faith because this essentially relational movement cannot be reduced to a calculable risk but must be approached as a matter of duty, as an obligation to suspend the self in favor of an other that may not

come. "A training in literary reading is a training to learn from the singular and the unverifiable. Although literature cannot speak, this species of patient reading, miming an effort to make the text respond, as it were, is a training not only in poiesis, accessing the other so well that probable action can be prefigured, but teleopoiesis, striving for a response from the distant other, without guarantees," (Spivak, 532). Practically, this means the necessity of recognizing that though we engage with each other, we will be unable to completely understand each other. This seeming limitation is actually a transgressive satisfaction against a dominant masculine ideology of capital possession: "we do not necessarily need to hear and know what is stated in its entirety, that we do not need to 'master' or conquer the narrative as a whole, that we may know in fragments. I suggest that we may learn from spaces of silence as well as spaces of speech, that in the patient act of listening to another tongue we may subvert that culture of capitalist frenzy and consumption that demands all desire must be satisfied immediately," (hooks, 174). Recognizing the other involves recognizing the vast humanity of the other, an inherently transgressive act as it humanizes rather than commodifies a fellow human being.

The other as a collectivity of difference

Just as the other must be grasped in radical empathy, so must the absolute other be reached for without guarantees of recuperation. We must seek the reestablishment of unity and collectivity as an a priori condition of humanity, necessitating the act of charging forward on behalf of justice without the calculable foreknowledge and experience that it will work out as expected. "These matters can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story;

only if, in however disguised and symbolic a form, they are seen as sharing a single fundamental theme–for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity" (Jameson, 19). Once narrative is acknowledged as something that is inherently conflicting, even this narrative of collective unity also implies difference. Essential to such recognition of difference is that of conflict and contradiction. We must not collapse all identities beneath one gaze but empower gazes to see their own ways. This inherently involves the freeing of people along lines of oppression, freeing them to not be defined by the white gaze or the male gaze. It is through their self-sustaining eyes they must see from, and society must recognize this self-sufficient difference. It is only through this radical individuality that the person can be negated and multiplied into a community, a collective, a multiplicity of individuals united.

Difference becomes not a force of separation, rather "[d]ifference is then here understood as a relational concept, rather than as the mere inert inventory of unrelated diversity," (Jameson, 41). Difference becomes a network of relations, of a collective intersection. Through this recognition of intersecting difference, "we can restore, at least methodologically, the lost unity of social life, and demonstrate that widely distant elements of the social totality are ultimately part of the same global historical process," (Jameson, 226).

This cultivates the emergence of difference, a vast set of now respected, now well thought out and critically and creatively engaged differences that cannot be reduced to equivalent market values to be circuited for profit. Education must always “recognize each classroom as different, that strategies must constantly be changed, invented, reconceptualized to address each new teaching experience," (hooks, 10-11). Education

then becomes, in Adorno's sense, a transient artistic effort that both captures the movement of pedagogy in an individualized set of different experiences and in a continual movement toward collective engagement. hooks goes on to say that this "notion of engagement threatens the institutionalized practices of domination. When the classroom is truly engaged, it's dynamic. It's fluid. It's always changing," (hooks, 158). This form of transience, this continually changing difference shakes up authority, frees the congealing habit of inertia, which Foucault fears from any power: "one of the tasks, one of the meanings of human existence—the source of human freedom—is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile. No aspect of reality should be allowed to become a definitive and inhuman law for us," (Foucault). This continual ability to break up calcification, find fluidity, and change is fueled by the confrontation of differences: "[c]onfronting one another across differences means that we must change ideas about how we learn; rather than fearing conflict we have to find ways to use it as a catalyst for new thinking," (hooks, 113). Confrontation, as long as it is done with engagement and compassion, necessitates the changing of learning patterns, and with that, the continued openness of mind suspended for another.

If the circuit for profit accumulation is to be resisted, the foundational ideological step of reducing values to equivalents must be subverted, and this means the creation of a justice of difference. In Spivak's terms, "being defined by the call of the other […] is not conducive to the extraction and appropriation of surplus. […] The method of a specifically literary training, a slow mind-changing process, can be used to open the imagination to such mindsets," (Spivak, 533). The latter is her signaling that this different way of thought, while resisting commodification, will also open the mind's dominant

narratives up to other ways of thinking, being, and living. As said, largely because of ideology and the inertia of cultural and personal narratives, this is a slow evolution of thought, but it can be made if thought is freed from the restraint of thought, unchained to reclaim itself as thinking. Thought must be taught to embrace thinking, to welcome difference as something essential and fundamental.

> "Difference must be [seen] as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark… Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters. Within the interdependence of mutual differences lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the concomitant power to effect those changes which can bring that future into being. Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged," (Lorde, 10).

Vision of a world beyond capital relies on the movement of thought, on the use of difference. True interdependency relies not on a subsumption into similarity but a respect for difference and a collective vision for collective prosperity.

Limitations

Though this does not constitute the whole of a revolutionary praxis, it can possibly constitute the foundation. This is the base on which other demands can be made to continue restructuring the university. One of its limitations for instance is the college's structural price wall that still bars many people from attending and gaining the privilege of this knowledge. The format will still implicitly be a model of exclusion and ascension.

The liberal arts college must absolutely be maintained as a place that will accept and support anyone. As implied before, this will involve working not just at the surface level of diversity quotas but working to alleviate material structural conditions. Ideally, this would involve overcoming the fragmentation of society (another device of

capitalism) to cross cultural and economic borders so that radical progressives could actually deal with issues in a total sense and not merely in a fractured, one-sided way. Even the most radical educator cannot solve race issues from one side of the university application, for instance.

Though we have loaded the university with some abstract theoretical goals, with a nearly utopian sense of promise, we must remember the overall goal of bringing this education to everyone. One issue with the analysis so far is that we tacitly assumed that higher education is the best path for learning and everyone should use it, which Sara Ahmed discusses as being problematic: “one problem with being so used to the learning = good equation, is that we might even think that everyone should aspire to such learning, and that the absence of such learning is the ‘reason’ for inequality and injustice […] There is of course a class elitism that presumes university is the place we go to learn, let alone to think. This is the same elitism that says that those who don’t get to university, have failed, or are deprived. The aspiration of ‘university for all’ offers at one level a vital hope for the democratization of an elite culture, but at another, sustains the bourgeois illusion that others ‘would want’ the culture that is constituted precisely through not being available to all," (Ahmed). Here, Ahmed refers to the ascending culture embedded in the university that survives in its structure of exclusion. To presume that these expensive institutions are the only or best places to learn is certainly erroneous and carries tones of classism and racism. As Paulo Freire absolutely proved, critical pedagogy can certainly be done, and may be more productive and worthwhile, not with middle class white young adults but with illiterate developing-world peasants. Perhaps, after all, this is the ultimate education we should seek.

As Gayatri Spivak says: "[i]f one wishes to make this restricted utopianism, which extends to great universities everywhere, available for global social justice, one must unmoor it from its elite safe harbors, supported by the power of the dominant nation's civil polity, and be interested in a kind of education for the largest sector of the future electorate in the global South—the children of the rural poor—that would go beyond literacy and numeracy and find a home in an expanded definition of a 'Humanities to come,'" (Spivak, 526). Perhaps the end goal of this educational revolution must extend past America to the shores of its colonized globe. My experience as a student has already been stretched to its limit, so this is simply not something I can say for sure and absolutely not something I can analyze.

Visionary Politics

In this revised context, what we have discussed so far may then be the foundation to a foundation. With this teaching in mind, maybe students in late capitalist countries can leverage the privilege they have to aid in the critical consciousness raising of the globally oppressed. And while the direct, hands-on work of Freire must certainly be continued, so must internal work done within the oppressor country itself. Oppression does not dominantly work from individual to individual but is sustained through the inertia of institutions and their discourses of frozen power relations. People cannot be saved one at a time but must be saved from the institutions that oppress them through the destruction of said institutions. This requires the political engagement of the electorate within these institutions.

Before active politics, students must bring the "essentially anti-empiricist" revolution described through literal texts to figurative texts. Their mission must be one

that "drives the wedge of the concept of a 'text' into the traditional disciplines by extrapolating the notion of 'discourse' or 'writing' onto objects previously thought to be 'realities' or objects in the real world, such as the various levels or instances of a social formation: political power, social class, institutions, and events themselves. When properly used, the concept of the 'text' does not, as in garden-variety semiotic practice today, 'reduce' these realities to small and manageable written documents of one kind or another, but rather liberates us from the empirical object—whether institution, event, or individual work— by displacing our attention to its constitution as an object and its relationship to the other objects thus constituted," (Jameson, 296). Students must attain their humanity through education and beyond that, realize the humanity of society itself. All history is human, and all humans are historical, so in this way reality can be expanded from merely being empirically observable but to be textualized as something that can be read, reread, written, and rewritten. This is the basis of political action.

With a political vision, university students can then begin to constitute the foundation to a foundation of critical global consciousness. To construct a true political vision, students must engage in the composition of dialectally engaged thought, which requires everything described previously. It must also fundamentally take as its substance the praxis dialectic of practice and theory. The above analysis is not merely a theory to be taught to students but a theory that must arise from their previous practices as alienated students. Students will not accept nor truly understand a theory that is merely transmitted to them; to do so would continue the pattern this theory fights against. In fact, if this theory can only be accepted that way, it would show some error deep within it for "[o]nly social practice can be the criterion of truth," (Zedong, 68). Instead, this theory must

merge alongside the relinquishing of alienated practice for engaged practice. It must arise naturally as a reaction and as a setting toward action. Mao describes this beautifully:

> "Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing," (Zedong, 81-82).

To complete the circuit of this dialectic, we cannot end with the high abstract theory of thought described above but must take it back down into practice. After all, without the dynamism of this dialectic, "the material of studies loses vitality, becomes relatively dead, because it is separated from situations," (Dewey, 182). If the abstract goal of this theory is the never resting, never freezing, never ossifying of thought then that very theory must be submerged in practice before emerging as theory again.

All of this engagement must not be caged purely to the text and to the classroom but must be freed to analyze the world. We must resist, subvert, and free ourselves from the norm that education can only take place in the classroom. Foucault shows the error of this in the university's structural constitution: “[t]he student is put outside of society, on a campus. Furthermore, he is excluded while being transmitted a knowledge which is traditional in nature, obsolete, ‘academic’ and not directly tied to the needs and problems of today […] Young people from 18 to 25 are thus, as it were, neutralized by and for society, rendered safe, ineffective, socially and politically castrated. There is the first function of the university: to put students out of circulation," (Foucault, 194). Despite its many problems and even the very structure of the university as an institution of

exclusion, we must work with what we have. We must subvert these walls and reintroduce students back into society through texts that connect them to it, perspectives that enable empathy and understanding of it, and direct experiences that engage the student in whatever community is around their campus. They must lean how to embed grand theory into minute practice. This is the basis of a political vision. As more and more public spaces are privatized and commodified, higher education must be defended, maintained, and extended as a space that engages people communally.

In Readings' analysis, "the University loses its privileged status as the model of society and does not regain it by becoming the model of the absence of models. Rather, the University becomes one site among others where the question of being-together is raised, raised with an urgency that proceeds from the absence of the institutional forms (such as the nation-state), which have historically served to mask that question for the past three centuries or so," (20). The university must not be an ideal or higher place of being but simply another place of being. The uniqueness of the university must be found not in its constitution but in its reflexivity as a self-critical institution. Though it only has a relative autonomy from the market base, it is one of the best institutions situated to incorporate within itself the praxis of self-reflection.

We must remember Stuart Hall's maxim that “[t]he university is a critical institution or it is nothing.” Necessarily wrapped up in this self-criticism is a criticism that spirals outward into society. As Marx so wonderfully put it: "[c]riticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain, not in order that man shall bear the chain without caprice or consolation but so that he shall cast off the chain and pluck the living flower," (54). The political vision of the university is charged with the above analysis that

conceives of reality as something fundamentally human, historical, and malleable but combines it with the idea that, as we must do justice to thought, we must to justice to all those that produce thought – a fundamentally political idea. After all, "[u]nless the ideals expressed in great works of literature and art (not to mention religion, which the humanities sometimes claim to have reluctantly superseded) can and do become politically empowered, there seems to be no point in teaching them. Departments of English, for example, could just as easily and even more practically teach great advertisements as great books, if the only purpose is the merely rhetorical one of learning to read and write effectively," (Brantlinger, 6). The humanities must become political, not only for it to survive but for it to have a purpose.

Further, this should not be exclusively focused on academic thinkers but on thinkers that have been dehumanized from thought. It is from the oppressed that thought will gain its most radical edge: "[w]hen the ‘repressed’ of their culture and their society returns, it's an explosive, utterly destructive, staggering return, with a force never yet unleashed and equal to the most forbidding of suppressions," (Cixous, 81). Through Adorno, we can see that a liberation movement must use thought that breaks down ideologies: "the unideological thought is that which does not permit itself to be reduced to 'operational terms' and instead strives solely to help the things themselves to that articulation from which they are other-wise cut off by the prevailing language," (Adorno, 206). Counter ideological education must make available the sociolinguistic tools by which the oppressed can articulate themselves not merely as subordinated utterances of an oppressive langue but as human articulators with their own active, political power in their individuation. Only with the oppressed marshaled under a collective narrative of

engaged, historical, critical, creative, and political thinking can there be the foundation for a mass based movement for freedom and equality.

This foundation is not to be settled in static identities but in interlocked recognitions of difference. Too much focus on difference can fracture people; it can make the uncrossable chasms between them too frightening to leap. Difference must be upheld as primary but the collective narrative that unites must find its similarity not in a arbitrary similarities but in charged, relational, and active solidarities. The similarities that unite us are not idle aspects of identity but similar struggles in this collective project of meaning making. We must find ourselves and each other enmeshed in such a project, a narrative in which we must struggle together to make meaning for ourselves. This struggle must be intersectional, self-differentiating, self-conflicting, and ultimately open-ended. As it is a struggle *for*, it must also be a struggle *against*, as it must also necessarily include effort to disestablish and dislodge those that would preclude meaning, those that would dehumanize collective meaning making capabilities, and those that would sever the social connections that constitute such meanings. We cannot found a collectivity individually but must be collective to establish a collective.

Fearing Collectivity

Such a collectivity is always staved off by the triplet fears of theology, totalitarianism, and fascism that it is presumed to be liable to. True, similar narratives of collective action have united people only to weaponize them, to blind them, and use them. However, these narratives were based in much different sentiments, much different desires and reasons, almost always taking part in the ascending culture model brought to an extreme of exclusion by elimination. Their utopias always necessitated the destruction

of others. They always made the essential mistake of founding their collectivities on a specific content, which must either be merely divisive or wholly fascistic.

This narrative is instead founded on something entirely different by its basis in difference. Difference, by its very nature, cannot mean the same thing twice and in so doing has no specific content. It is a relational concept that must always be dialectically related between people, their social reality, and each other. Rather than giving the text and thus the other primacy, fascism places authority in an ideal content but a wholly objectified one, a content that is to be worshiped as whole unto itself, as perfect in its inhumanity.

Benjamin argues that "[f]ascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property," (241). This art is mere beauty, grasping the surface of meaning and holding it aloft as primary, as they focus on worship rather than co-creative interpretation. The right to activity in materiality is denied in favor of an idle idealism that merely floats above reality as distraction or escapism. Humanity is not united in difference, certainly not in the idea that they must feel the gaze of each other in history and do justice to it, but is collected in worship, not looking to each other but looking up, looking away. This is done so that mankind can be alienated from its own humanity: "self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art," (Benjamin, 242). Fascism makes its politics aesthetic, reducing art to a mechanism of the political while what is being suggested here

is Communism's response, that of politicizing art by engaging it in historical social reality. Art is not held aloft but is held here, held in between us, and in so doing, this embedding makes it political.

Politicizing the Humanities

As such, this movement must also be rooted in the struggles of the oppressed. Despite culture being exposed and made less ideological, it is still an important struggle to be had. Vestiges of ascending culture still exist everywhere, and it is often called upon to dull the blade of marketization as it kills. Further, for a true recognition of difference, the oppressed must come to consciousness of their oppression, and that necessitates articulating themselves as oppressed beings both damaged and free from their social determination. Similarly, oppressors must make a similar but opposite journey to become self-conscious of their social determinations as beneficiaries from oppression. Despite the existence of a few good people in any given class of oppressors, they all benefit from the oppression done to others on their behalf by people in their class. They must become conscious of their development at the expense of others and how this development too is irreparably warped by this oppression.

As radical feminists have noted, though gender is itself an oppressive social structure, its alleviation does not come from masculinizing women. Men too must be feminized, and in this recognition, understand that neither side of the oppressive matrix is then the better but that all are divided and worsened by oppression with the difference that one class gets the advantage in terms of dominant power in the use of the other class. In order to assert universal difference, people must be free enough to assert their cultural and individual differences. This must develop and be recognized before a

universalization can occur. It is a similar path of development as socialism is to communism. It is a necessary and fundamentally important step, but it also must be conceived as historical as well, as a goal to be reached in line for another goal. Development is always paramount.

We must eventually expand the social dialectic past national and cultural borders to conceive of the absolute individual as a contradiction of absolute humanity, of the person as subject within the planet (of course, gradations will and should continue to exist within this dialectic but the dominant contradiction must be expanded). As with thought, we must do justice to this as yet unrealized future, to a "humanities to come,": "we have to ask the question of the formation of collectivities without necessarily prefabricated contents," (Spivak, 26).

> "If we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us; it is not our dialectical negation, it contains us as much as it flings us away. And thus to think of it is already to transgress, for, in spite of our forays into what we metaphorize, differently, as outer and inner space, what is above and beyond our own reach is not continuous with us as it is not, indeed, specifically discontinuous. We must persistently educate ourselves into this peculiar mindset," (Spivak, 73).

This is our connection to Marx's species-being and is perhaps one of the only ways of wholly dealing with problems such as global poverty and climate change that effect humanity on a wider scale than anyone is yet capable of conceiving. We must be contained as much as we stretch, we must be constrained as much as we reach, and we must find thought's limitations so that it can surmount them.

A Ruthless Critique of Everything Existing

The foundation of this movement must be built on the ashes of neoliberalism's foundational ideologies. Its original sin, the seed of its failure, can be found in its basis in

the enlightenment. As Adorno analyzes: "[a]ll enlightenment is accompanied by the anxiety that what set enlightenment in motion in the first place and what enlightenment ever threatens to consume may disappear: truth," (80). Each modernization of enlightenment, through positivism and marketization, has been an updating of this anxiety. Consumed by this concern, devoured by it because they are founded on it, enlightenment thinkers must dig deeper into a reality they increasingly define as objective, natural, and material. What becomes the strictest, the most congealed, calcified, and reified of all ideologies is the idea that this reality, whatever it may be at the time, is all there is.

During classical enlightenment it was one thing, but in modern market society, even history is denied for the fact that this reality is all there is. History is either a relic or a fossil, left behind as useless or useful only for a stepping-stone. All that matters to the anxiety of the enlightenment is that we have some foundation to count on for truth. Market reality does define a certain material truth but it is not the only one. The reification inherent to enlightenment's desperate anxiety ensures that no vision can see beyond this reality. To combat this, we must both creatively posit a new reality and mercilessly critique the claims of this one.

At all points, “we must rigorously demonstrate the noncorrespondence between what is claimed and what is, and the techniques of power that allow the claimed world to appear not merely as the actual world but the best of all actual worlds," (Povinelli). The abstract theory of our vision must always root itself as an active reaction against the material oppressiveness of the current material reality. There is danger to this, as Sara Ahmed discusses: "[t]he figure of the raging revolutionary or angry activist teaches us

something: those who fight for alternative futures are seen as committing acts of senseless violence, which stops any hearing of the ways in which revolution makes sense. Indeed, we might consider the very politics of who or what gets seen as the origin of violence: the revolutionaries expose violence, but the violence they expose is not recognized as violence: structural violence is violence that is veiled," (Ahmed). Counter ideological struggle is then fundamentally an educative act meant to unveil the structural violence embedded in our cultures, identities, discourses, and institutions. Further, we must unveil the falsity of narratives that define these institutions as innocent and name them both as being violent.

To do this, we must also recognize that capitalism sets its own reality so within its own marketized discourse, it may appear right. Opposition then cannot be founded on a merely empirical claim of falsity. Terry Eagleton shows a different angle: "[i]deological statements may be true to society as at present constituted, but false in so far as they thereby serve to block off the possibility of a transformed state of affairs,'" (Eagleton, 27). Again, we must confront the opposition as something inherently totalitarian in that it freezes and insulates itself from the possibility of change. We must then transform from merely being critical to being oppositional.

An Oppositional Humanities

This opposition must sustain itself between the dialectic of criticality and creativity. It must clearly critique as is described above but clearly create as well. This is where academics start to tread some treacherous waters. Edward Said reflects that "[t]heory is taught so as to make the student believe that he or she can become a marxist, a feminist, an afrocentrist, or a deconstructionist with about the same effort and

commitment required in choosing items from a menu," (Said) a clearly commodified version of a radical politics. In a 1996 interview, Ajiaz Ahmad counters this idea with a discussion of the bewildering need to restate and reiterate what are the now obvious truths of global poverty, wealth inequality, and environmental degradation. He chalks it up to the pattern of

> "institutionalizing of certain kinds of radicalism [which] has gone hand in hand with a certain sanitization of vocabulary, which is ultimately quite devastating for thought itself. […] the critique of capitalism is sundered from any forthright affirmation of what might replace it. So, the more anti-bourgeois, and anti-colonial etc. one becomes, the less one talks about socialism as a determinate horizon. […] To speak of any of that directly and simply is to be "vulgar,"" (Ahmad).

Theoretical language, even whilst maintaining a critical edge, has been dulled from its creative one. Even the most incisive of critics will find critiques blunted without a creative framing. This sanitized discourse makes radicalism all the more ripe for commodification. bells hooks studies a specific form of this process in relation to feminism:

> "any feminist transformational process that seeks to change society is easily co-opted if it is not rooted in a political commitment to mass-based feminist movement. Within white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, we have already witnessed the commodification of feminist thinking (just as we experience the commodification of blackness) in ways that make it seem as though one can partake of the 'good' that these movements produce without any commitment to transformative politics and practice. In this capitalist culture, feminism and feminist theory are fast becoming a commodity that only the privileged can afford. This process of commodification is disrupted and subverted when as feminist activists we affirm our commitment to a politicized revolutionary feminist movement that has as its central agenda the transformation of society. From such a starting point, we automatically think of creating theory that speaks to the widest audience of people," (70-1).

Radicalism must resist its sanitization and through its commitment to collective action, resist commodification. There will always be a latent tendency in academic discourse to

make such theories exclusive, to hole them up in obscure jargon that will make them the exclusive and thus valuable possessions of an elite class. This must be resisted through a radical effort to continually bring what is gained in the university out to the rest of society. As implied before, this opposition will not be stranded but be founded on a narrative that can and should be subverted and reappropriated from the traditionalists that abuse it: democracy.

John Dewey stated and restated the need to modernize democracy but he has not been heard, even as his thoughts are appropriated into a classical canon of educational philosophy. His respect is largely transmuted only through his neutralization. His writings still reveal, however, the radical potential of an authentic democracy that genuinely ensures equality, one that does not stabilize itself but continually modifies itself to new situations. As he says, "[i]t is because the conditions of life change, that the problem of maintaining a democracy becomes new, and the burden that is put upon the school, upon the educational system is not that of stating merely the ideas of the men who made this country, their hopes and their intentions, but of teaching what a democratic society means under existing conditions," (Dewey, 40). This idea would open up democracy to the kinds of reflexive criticisms that would modernize it and further, it would reveal itself as having been appropriated by those that would restrict it.

If we truly want to fight for the authentic forms of freedom and equality, we must capture this narrative from those that would misuse it and reveal that very misuse. A true democracy is a radical one:

> "[a] democratic education rests on the ideal of a society that is inclusive and celebrates the rich diversity of human beings, not as 'capital', but as creative, intelligent, and feeling beings open to the rich possibilities of human life. This view of democracy as encompassing the inclusion and participation of all groups

> and individuals is at the heart of struggles over education. It is the potential of educational institutions to be sites for critique and open and heated discussion that makes them dangerous and feared by those who want acquiescence and ignorance about the realities of power and privilege," (Weiler, 221).

Weiler further describes how this ideal of democratic education can be theorized against the current regime: "[t]he struggle over the meaning of education and democracy in the post-modern world continues a long battle between those who would restrict access to knowledge and power to elites and those who seek a more equal and participatory society," (Weiler, 208). We must democratize knowledge and thinking not in an effort to reduce it but to spread it, to open it up, to free it and empower it. Education, from the humanities in particular, must "fuel [democracy] by inventing and handing over to the people new instruments of political expression, by enfranchising people politically, turning them into political subjects," (Zmijewski, 68). Students must be treated not as containers to be subjected to knowledge but democratic, political, human subjects in themselves. The classroom can model this as it practices a progressive way of being together that is rarely experienced in the marketplace. Humanities education must introduce humanity and teach students not to let it go, to fight for it for themselves and for everyone else.

"Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world," (Freire, 34). With this radical choice in mind, we must commit to the latter. Within education, theory and practice can be united (but never completed) within efforts that constitute the best foundation currently available to us for an absolute transformation

of society. bells hooks ends her incredible *Teaching To Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* with such an idea:

> "The quest for knowledge that enables us to unite theory and practice is one such passion. To the extent that professors bring this passion, which has to be fundamentally rooted in a love for ideas we are able to inspire, the classroom becomes a dynamic place where transformations in social relations are concretely actualized and the false dichotomy between the world outside and the inside world of the academy disappears," (195).

The university can begin to pass through its own boundaries as democratic reflexes and new habits of being are created, cultivated, and taught, as they are propagated beyond the walls of the college to the rest of the world. We must remember that "[t]he academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom," (hooks, 207).

In the end, radical empathy, species being, bold humility, the call of the other, and consciousness raising are all metaphors for the same as yet unarticulated channel through which this ultimate dialectic is routed. Education can be the foundation to this dialectic of freedom, one that sets together the absolutely transient moment of interpersonal transformative pedagogy with the absolutely universal struggle for freedom and equality. In the negation of either we find the other and only with both set together can humanities education actively take part in transforming itself, the college in general, society, and the world.

We must recognize that even within our social determinism, even within our

individual articulations of a socially defined language, an infinite possibility can be derived from a finite set. As in language itself, a limited set of letters and sounds both restrict the user and offer the possibility of composing something new from the same material through the forging of new relations, new networks of intersubjective meanings. There is an infinite potential humanity encased within our finite sociality, a finitude that we cannot escape but an infinity for which we must reach without being able to calculate it beforehand, without knowing that it will actualize at all or in any way we could currently imagine.

Humanities education must centralize itself within the core of the liberal arts college as something that engages in the critical creative re-envisioning of what it means to be together. By founding itself on the text as a focal point for intersubjective discussion and realization, the humanities classroom can be a model for posing this eternal question of how people can be with each other. More importantly, the humanities classroom must not answer this question but open up what was ideologically answered to a question that can only be solved from moment to moment, never forever, with the collective effort of intersubjective interlocutors. The question must be freed from the reification of an answer, opened up to the possibility of radically different ways of being together that can be explored, tested, analyzed, criticized, created, discussed, shared, and hoped.

The text is the center of this realization, an object that embodies the dialectic by materially existing in a finite, objective sense and immaterially existing in an infinite, intersubjective sense. Art must be freed from the realms of absolute objectivity in intention and absolute subjectivity in relativism, pushed beyond interpersonal bounds to

being both a product of collectivity and a mediator toward the developing of its future realizations. The question to be opened then, is not whether it's art or not or what it means, but what it does. What habits does it break? What patterns does it disrupt? How does it challenge preconceptions? Does it create new space? What does it show us that we have forgotten? How does it capture society and what does it make us see in that vision? What does it move us toward? Is it worthwhile? Is it good? Does it do justice to thought and to humanity? The text must be used to expose contradictions, make the need for their communal solving apparent and in so doing, keep meaning open and intersubjective, as well as the practice that will enact it. Through texts, we can reach toward the realization of collectivity.

We have to take the first step, a leap of faith toward a future collectivity that we may never see, that may never come. The college in generally must redefine one of its core missions, that of raising the next generation. Education must raise a generation that may never come, a collectivity that may never realize itself politically. Educators cannot calculate beforehand what this movement must be, lest it be commodified by the ever hungry apparatus, but must engage students in their very humanities as historical, critical, creative beings capable not merely of seeing but learning to re-see and re-envision the world, so that it can be changed. Calcification cannot merely be broken to be replaced by something else that will itself be commodified, but the ideology of allowing things to calcify into naturalness must itself be fractured, opened to the freedom of thinking thought.

Further, this seeming abstractness must be continually practiced inside and outside the classroom, opening up these theories of collectivity to change by way of them

finding actualization, closure, and potential reopening. We must not merely theorize but practice, for it is always in the relational dialectic that potential remains open and commodification impossible. Practice and theory must be found to be transient, mobile, and ever changing, ever adapting. Outside or inside of the humanities classroom, they find their dialectic embodied in pedagogy, in the teacher-student relationship that keeps knowledge open and learning coming. The humanities classroom is not sufficient but it can be the first, with faith that it will not be the last, in posing a future beyond the way things are now, not a utopia but a potential, a difference.

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